University of Alberta

Organizational Analysis Using Morgan's Metaphorical Process

by

Ann Marie Wilson

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Administration and Leadership

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2000

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Organizational Analysis Using Morgan's Metaphorical Process** submitted by Ann Marie Wilson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Leadership.

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Abstract

In this research, Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical method of organizational analysis was chosen as a way to acquire knowledge and skills that might enhance abilities to better understand others; hence, organizations as social constructs. Morgan's quasi-ethnographic component, but not his action learning component, of organizational analysis was applied by the researcher in a postsecondary educational institution context.

Working with the interview responses of 12 people to four college scenarios that depicted institution-wide activities, the researcher endeavored to interpret and correspond respondent's views with Morgan's (1986, 1997a) eight metaphorical *Images of Organization*. The findings suggested that study respondents' comments tended more frequently to be associated with orthodox views of organizations as machines, organisms, brains, political systems, and cultures.

In terms of *using* the quasi-ethnographic *process*, the researcher determined that Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method can be used by people at various levels of learning, from basic to more advanced, with positive outcomes; can enhance critical thinking skills; provides an outline upon which to base recommendations for future organizational directions; and provides the opportunity, for those inclined, to rethink and affirm their own personal views and assumptions. Various features came to the fore as each "reading" of the organization was completed, metaphor by metaphor. Subsequently, the organizational analysis method was effective in profiling organizational characteristics and imagining possible future directions.

Another step was added in this research to augment understanding people and organizations, and that was to explore which world view paradigms might be associated with each metaphorical image of organization. To achieve this, the metaphors in Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization* were considered in relation to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*. The

findings suggest that Morgan's eight metaphors were spread across all four paradigms (functionalist, interpretivist, radical humanist, and radical structuralist). The organization under study tended to espouse assumptions related to the functionalist paradigm at the time of the study. The recommendations for future directions that were outlined by the researcher for all four study scenarios repeatedly spanned functionalist, interpretivist, and radical structuralist views.

Everyday . . .

I am here with you,

responsible to you,

listening . . .

Do I really hear what you mean?

I stay with you,

committed to you,

feeling and thinking . . .

Do I enter even a small part of your world?

Our voices blend or contrast in forms of conversation, dialogue, dialectic,

randomly we express perspectives, perceptions, aims and beliefs
making meaning . . .

Were we at all reflective, critical, insightful, mindful?

We create a reality

and invite others to live the experience

reifying values, power, sensings . . .

Do we understand what we have done when we create a reality?

A PERSONAL NOTE

To my Mother....

When I was young, I can remember asking you frequently if there were any other or secret rooms in *our house* that I had not yet seen. In this thesis, I am still asking that question. Are there rooms I have not yet seen?

To my Father...

The whole time my brothers, my sister, and I were growing up, you were building and renovating *our house*. I do not believe there was one wall in that house that you did not change in some way. You also lifted the house from its foundation, examined it, and put in a basement where none existed before; you then explored the attic and built a new second floor. Maybe that is why I kept asking if there were other rooms to see! You showed me how a world can be transformed; you showed me how we can create our own world; you showed me that other worlds exist.

To my Husband...

You helped me to find *a house that was mine, and yours*; a place to spin dreams and build a life. You helped me explore so many new dimensions of life and learning that without you I would not have tried to find or create. This study is yet another of those dimensions.

A recurring dream...

Over the last 20 years or so, in a recurring "asleep" dream I find myself in a *house* not known to me. I do find and enter a secret room. Each time, though, I do not stay in that secret room. It becomes more a passageway than a place to stay. Each time I pass through the room to the outside; to a wider, yet natural, place to explore. Questing and questioning are what learners do. The major reason I undertook this study was to learn, and in so doing, to understand the foundations upon which people build their worlds. Tester (1993) discussed how people create a sense of identity and being. He considered two basic and opposite ways that people can view and approach life. To

convey his ideas, he used the metaphor of one's dwelling place. Tester (1993) suggested that there are times when people accept their present dwelling as a warm, comfortable "cradle of certainty and confidence" (p. 30) where

> great efforts will be taken to improve on the architecture bequeathed by the parents to their children. Great efforts will be taken to forget the possibly shaky foundations of the house and, instead, no expenditure will be spared on the improvement of the wall-paper and the ornamentation (the abyss outside the front door will be hidden). . . . The house itself will become a place to be taken for granted. (p. 30)

Tester (1993) felt that this way of approaching life and assuming a sense of being is characterized by a bounded rationality. And, when people accept given forms, they tend to act in restricted ways within those forms. There is a time to accept, but only after exploration has provided reasons to consciously accept a state of being. Along these lines, Tester's urging is for people to reach that point consciously and mindfully, after exploring and testing places to see if those places are where those people want to be. Otherwise, Tester's concern is that people who do not question or quest "do not want, do not imagine, do not understand, any transcendence of the existing bounded forms" (p. 31). Things would be accepted as they are, and people would busy themselves with patching up, dressing up, and decorating what already exists. His next point of view, then, becomes possible when people give up their will to be certain or unquestionably accepting and are overtaken, maybe for the first time or for a repeated time, by a will to quest and better understand. Tester put it this way:

> Alternatively, however, it is possible that some of the children will look to the building of the parents and, instead of accepting it as a gift and as a haven in a stormy world, they will try to have a look at the foundations. The house will not be taken for granted as the inevitable and only possible sturdy dwelling. Rather it will be approached with pickaxes and drills as the children try to find out how the parents did what they did. (p. 31)

As I undertook this study, I was looking for ways that I could enhance my abilities to better understand situations and people I have encountered and will

encounter in my life. And in the course of doing that, I need to look at the foundations of dwelling places and the various rooms built upon them. This was my aim in the present study.

Acknowledgements

I extend heartfelt thanks to Margaret Haughey for helping me engage in an honest learning experience. She has worked with me through many outlines, held discussions, provided guidance, loaned books, and been with me as I moved forward and fell back.

Eugene Ratsoy introduced me to *Images of Organization*, and without that experience this study would not exist. He also contributed significantly to helping me clarify and present this study. Heartfelt thanks, Dr. Ratsoy. Gordon McIntosh helped me at major destination points throughout this initial journey by suggesting certain directions. Thank you, Dr. McIntosh, for your flexibility of mind and your support. Larry Beauchamp led the most meaningful curriculum course I have ever taken. Thank you, Dr. Beauchamp, for helping to pique my interest in exploring various assumptions and ideologies and in realizing that the implicit eventually becomes the explicit. Jean Clandinin's questions and interest in my learning goals added a refinement to how I thought about my work. Thank you, Dr. Clandinin.

And I thank Gareth Morgan for putting out work that stimulates critical thinking and that stems from a need to understand, rather than be certain.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt, first, at understanding and using Gareth Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical process of organizational analysis and, second, at initiating an exploration of its foundations and contributions to organizational analysis. I was introduced to Morgan's *Images of Organization* (*Images*) as a core text in my PhD program and became intrigued with the message that organizations are complex human creations that can be better understood by viewing them from multiple perspectives.

Using metaphors, *Images* presents eight ways of looking at organizations to gain insight into their foundations and ongoing development. The metaphors are organizations as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination. The metaphorical views, when taken together, provide a window through which a more extensive view of organization can be comprehended, compared with bounded views that often result from seeing organization through one's own preferred and accustomed frames. The work also provides suggestions for how, by keeping open analytical and intuitive frames of mind, one can develop action-oriented storylines that are based on a multiview analysis of the organization at a given point in time and that outline potential next directions.

Images of Organization (Morgan, 1986, 1997a) itself is a complex work that can be viewed and explored from numerous vantage points, such as its metaphorical dimension, its organizational-analysis dimension, its methodological dimension, and its epistemological and ontological foundations. This study concerns itself with the last two of these areas, its methodology and its foundations. The method is accessible at various personal levels of learning and application from a beginner's level of acknowledgement and comprehension through to advanced levels of internalization, implementation, and

personalization of the method as part of one's everyday life. On that continuum, this study endeavored to progress from the initial comprehension and acknowledgement of the metaphors and the method achieved in the researcher's introductory course, to an intermediate stage that involved a thorough application of the metaphorical method of organizational analysis. Furthermore, an effort was made to explore the foundations of each metaphor to determine whether they shared certain assumptions about society and science, and hence related to certain paradigms. These activities were then followed by a reflective phase in which an overview of the study was written and observations provided on the researcher's experience with using the method. At the time that *Images of Organization* became part of my studies, I was looking for ways to better *understand* how people in organizations perceived and acted on issues in varying and perhaps unique ways.

Statement of the Problem

As an organizational consultant, I was sensitive to the notion that a diversity of views combine to create organizations but had no overarching structure to help me understand the abundance of views and their genesis. The *Images* (Morgan, 1986) method of analysis is devoted to helping people develop "the art of reading and understanding organizations" (p. 12), and I decided that working with this process might improve my capabilities to "read," order, and participate more meaningfully by understanding and guiding situations in organizational settings.

At another level, the problem with which this study was concerned was one of exploring the underlying assumptions of the metaphors, in an endeavor to interpret the foundations upon which people build their understandings of organizations and their functioning.

Research Direction

The major research questions that guided the study were:

1. In what ways does Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical process of reading and evaluating organization contribute to understanding situations and deciding on subsequent actions?

The subproblems related to the specific application of the model in a college setting were as follows:

- Considering the scenarios addressed in this study, what metaphorical organizational views appear to be evident in the responses to each college scenario?
- Based on the comments and observations provided by study participants, what critical evaluation storylines could guide the college in future activities relative to the scenarios addressed in this study?

2. What observations can be made about Morgan's (1986, 1997a) organizational analysis method that would provide insight for others who wish to use his process?

3. What relationships appear to exist between the metaphorical schools of thought in Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization* and the world view paradigms in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*?

Setting of the Study

I requested and received approval from the executive officers to conduct this study at a postsecondary educational institution. The institution had already demonstrated a commitment to self-analysis and to determining changed futures through the work of recent task forces that examined its modes of governance and approaches to curriculum. Prior to the research undertaking, I had provided contracted services to this institution, and the motivation to conduct this research was borne out of

a realization, which came to fruition through my experiences and professional growth at this institution, that organizations are social constructs. I anticipated that an analysis of key organizational directions might provide insight for study participants and myself into views that might possibly have informed decision making and action taking and that might be used to guide future directions. Furthermore, I wanted to make Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical method of analysis known to respondents so they could have an opportunity, by providing source information and then by reviewing the outcomes of the study, to determine for themselves the usefulness of such a diagnostic and evaluative method. Persons who were invited and who subsequently volunteered to participate in the study were amenable to discussing prepared scenarios related to the college in order that various views and premises within the institution might be identified by the researcher based on participants' comments and using Morgan's method of analysis.

At the time of the study, the college had a student body of approximately 26,000 students, ranging in age from under 20 to over 60 years. Approximately 50 programs were available across a number of different university transfer, career, arts, and community-oriented divisions. The institution was considered to be a vital and major member of the postsecondary educational system in its province. It had characteristics of a large, complex organization that had grown rapidly and successfully and that strove for continued relevance and excellence in its field.

In order to use Morgan's (1986, 1997a) process, organizational scenarios are required. This research could not have been undertaken without the full participation of this college.

Delimitations and Limitations

This research was delimited to the time periods during which the study was conducted. The eight metaphorical images and the method used in the reflective readings were drawn from Gareth Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization.* The

reflective readings were limited to 11 transcripts that focussed on four prepared study scenarios associated with one organization. The paradigms used in the exploration of metaphor-paradigm relationships were drawn from Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis.*

The application of the metaphorical method of organizational analysis was limited to completing a reflective reading of the organization studied in this research, and excluded working with members of the organization in an action mode on the reflective readings and future direction storylines.

Methodology

Morgan's method of organizational analysis comprises two main methodological approaches: quasi-ethnographic and action learning. This research focussed on the quasi-ethnographic portion of the method in an effort to experience and evaluate the process of "reading," diagnosing, and developing critical evaluation storylines that could assist the researcher in understanding and bringing forward tentative descriptions to client groups relating to foundations of organizations. The action learning approach, which involves a researcher-facilitator working with a group of people in identifying and resolving their concerns, was excluded in this study because the research focus was not on bringing forward outcomes of the process to a client group, but rather on the experience of using the process to "read," diagnose, and develop critical evaluation storylines that could be used with client groups. I made this choice because I felt that I had to acquire organizational analysis skills prior to working with people in an action learning mode.

The study is in two parts. In the first part a metaphorical analysis, as described by Morgan (1986, 1997a) in *Images of Organization*, was attempted. In the second part a preliminary analysis and critique of the metaphorical method was undertaken. In Part 1 I assumed the role of an organizational consultant and worked with a college to

test the adaptability and utility of the ethnographic portion of the metaphorical method. This analysis is described in Chapters III and IV. In Part 2 I, as researcher, explored the paradigms outlined in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis* in an endeavor to discern metaphor-paradigm relationships. The findings associated with Part 2 are presented in Chapter V. The methodology for Parts 1 and 2 is described in the following.

Part 1

As mentioned above, the method in this part was interpretive and encompassed a "quasi-ethnographic style of research" (Morgan, 1997b, p. 300), which is reviewed in the following.

Quasi-Ethnographic Style of Research

Rudestam and Newton (1992) identified the problems and concerns of ethnographic inquiry as being "concerned with capturing, interpreting, and explaining the way in which people in a group, organization, community, or society live, experience, and make sense out of their lives, their world, and their society or group" (p. 34). In Morgan's organizational analysis process, the activity of learning to "read" organizations using eight different metaphorical views can be deemed ethnographic in that the process aims to assist both the researcher and those participating in an organizational "reading" in acquiring insight into and an understanding of organizational characteristics.

Skills required by researchers in this quasi-ethnographic style of research center on being an "'active listener' and observer" (Morgan, 1997b, p. 300). Smircich (1983) suggested that "reflective listening and free floating attention [were] useful for learning and understanding the perspectives of others" (p. 166). She noted that "reflective or active listening is an energetic effort to receive fully the message being communicated by another" (p. 166), and this involves attending to implicit and explicit

communication, be it nonverbal or verbal, by encouraging speakers to clarify or elaborate on their message and by paraphrasing the speaker's communication to check for understanding. Smircich's reference to maintaining free-floating attention is connected with the need to listen openly to speakers and "tolerate a high degree of ambiguity" (p. 166). She counseled that researchers should not press "for immediate answers" (p. 166), but rather should concentrate on "understanding the world of the people in the setting" (p. 166). In so doing, the researcher can endeavor to maintain "free-floating attention" (p. 166) and respond "to what is actually present in the situation" (p. 166). Morgan (1997b) described these skills in the following way: "I become like 'a sponge' or 'blotting paper,' absorbing as much of a situation as I possibly can—with a minimum of judgment" (p. 300).

Much of my work in organizations over the past ten years has been as a facilitator helping groups of people share ideas and reach agreement on actions. That work requires that I maintain free-floating attention, not only for myself, but also for members of the group. To do this I endeavor to establish an open and trusting environment where people feel free to participate in group discussion and listen to others in the group. I endeavor to facilitate group members working with other group members and to suspend decision making until the point when all members feel ready for that step. Participants in my groups have often commented on my nonthreatening style, on my ability to put people at ease, and my skill in probing for meaning and helping the group to clarify their themes. As a facilitator I work very hard at listening actively to all participants and at inviting members of the group to participate in creating a reality. I have no personal need to lead groups in one direction or another because I am interested in what members of the group think and I fulfill my role by facilitating their individual definitions of realities and, it is hoped, helping them attain a form of consensual reality. I took these characteristics to the interview sessions held with each study participant in this study and endeavored to grasp the meaning of their

worlds. As I think about these traits, it occurs to me that being a reflective listener and maintaining free-floating attention could be enhanced should one possess certain views of the world.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested that "we are attracted to and shape research problems that match our personal view of seeing and understanding the world":

> Our constructions of the world, our values, and our ideas about how to inquire into those constructions, are mutually self-reinforcing. We conduct inquiry via a particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe and values that we hold, and because we hold those assumptions and values we conduct inquiry according to the precepts of that paradigm. (Schwandt, 1989, p. 399; as cited in Glesne & Peshkin, p. 9)

Morgan and Smircich (1980), in one of their works related to relationships among theory and method, explored "core assumptions that underlie the arguments in favour of different [research] methods" (p. 491). They suggested that ethnomethodology coheres with ontological assumptions founded on understanding "reality as a social construction" (p. 494) and with the notion that "humans create their realities" (p. 494). Smircich (1983, p. 161) and Morgan and Smircich (1980, p. 494) contended that reality is a social construction based on the view that people "impose themselves" in the process of making meaning and defining their world. I understand personal and social reality in such a nominalistic frame. I work with people based on the approach that I come to them with an open mind and without preconceptions of how they might have created their world, and hence with the conviction that I must try to understand their personal world, which is unique to each human being. I also subscribe to the concept that the views within those personal and unique worlds are communicated "through the medium of language, labels, actions and routines" (Morgan Smircich, 1980, p. 494) to create a socially constructed world, the meaning of which persons think they share, with

varying degrees of consensus. Morgan and Smircich elaborated on this position as follows:

> Human beings create their realities in the most fundamental ways, in an attempt to make their world intelligible to themselves and to others. They are not simply actors interpreting their situations in meaningful ways, for there are not situations other than those which individuals bring into being through their own creative activity. Individuals may work together to create a shared reality, but that reality is still a subjective construction capable of disappearing the moment its members cease to sustain it as such. Reality appears as real to individuals because of human acts of conscious or unwitting collusion. (p. 494)

It seems to me that such a constructivist conviction is key to working with Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical method of organizational analysis for two main reasons: (a) Accepting that a variety of views of the world combine to create a reality is consistent with working with the eight images of organization presented in both editions of *Images of Organization* (1986, 1997a) to reach an understanding, however partial, of how various views combine to create organization; and (b) contemplating and attempting to openly understand another's world may best be undertaken with an attitude that one does *not know* how others perceive situations, and hence a main and necessary goal of working with others is to try to understand their ways of seeing.

What might seem to be a contradiction arises here. If the ethnographic portion of the method is undertaken for purposes of piecing together a partial understanding of organization, then how could a researcher-facilitator claim not to have preconceived ideas of how the organization under study is constructed?

It seems to me that the "reading," diagnosis, and evaluation of the organization are brought forward as a starting point for dialogue with client groups, not as *the* reading or action plan. Organizations are complex entities, and the ability of an organizational analyst to bring forward alternative and possibly competing or complementary views may assist client groups in seeing the organization and its future in changed ways. Neither the ethnographic nor the action learning portion of the method

would "produce valid *descriptions* of the world" (Morgan, 1997b, p. 298), but rather they contribute to groups of people arriving at "'generalizable insights' that are relevant for understanding more about the intervention process and the key organizational dynamics, issues, or problems being addressed" (p. 198).

The manner in which the research was carried out in Phase 1 is described below. The method associated with the first part of the study had three major phases: (a) developing study scenarios and question sets, (b) framing organizational contexts, and (c) implementing Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of reflective reading. These phases are explained in the following, and reference is made to Morgan's first three research injunctions. In addition, subjectivity is addressed at the end of Part 1.

Developing Study Scenarios and Question Sets

I used the following criteria to identify areas for study scenarios: (a) The activities upon which the scenarios were to be developed had to contribute to the creation of college structure and culture, hence its overall social construction, in order that the analysis might contribute to better understanding the broad-based nature of the organization; (b) scenarios had to represent present-day college-wide directions or processes, in order that people from various parts of the college could reflect on the direction or process, and to maintain the focus of the analysis at an overall organizational level; and (c) public college documents related to the scenarios had to be accessible and used in a preliminary test analysis by the researcher to determine if it was possible to view organizations in multiple ways, because at the outset of the study I was unsure of my capability to work with various views of organization; neither was I convinced that organizations would exhibit characteristics outlined in Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphors.

Hence public college documents related to mission statement, governance principles, and curriculum task force recommendations were requested and provided through the college's executive offices. I reviewed the written documentation and pilot-

tested using the metaphors to see if various views of each college activity could be undertaken. Through that process, my concern that the metaphorical views may not be present subsided as I identified some elements of images; on the other hand, my calmness that images would be relatively clear cut and identifiable through the language that was used in the documents heightened as I realized that views intersected and were not discernible from examining the language alone, but required an interpretation of the intent of the message. This preliminary experiment with the method provided me with increased interest in pursuing its use, because it exhibited a way to obtain and work with diverse views and possibly identify foundations of organizational being.

I prepared four scenarios (Appendix A), along with questions that might guide reflection. The scenarios related to the college's governance principles, its curricular direction for the new century, its summary mission statement, and task force process. The development of these scenarios touched upon two of Morgan's (1997b) research injunctions. Injunction 1 "captures the basic rule that an ethnographic researcher must strive to get inside a situation and understand it as far as possible on its own terms" (p. 301). As Morgan put it, "The researcher has to find a way of getting the situation 'to speak for itself'" (p. 301). By creating scenarios, study participants were given situations to focus and reflect upon, and in this way situations could speak for themselves, and the researcher was given a foundation through which she could get inside organizational activities. Injunction 2 is related to Injunction 1 and emphasizes "that the researcher comes to the situation as a learner rather than an expert" (p. 301). The scenarios were not hypotheses, nor did I come to the study as an expert in understanding how these situations were socially constructed. Rather, through the scenarios, participants were able to speak to situations in order that insights could emerge.

Framing Organizational Contexts

In this phase, data were gathered, interpreted, and grouped into themes. The methods used are described in the following.

Sources of information. An invitation, comprising a cover letter (Appendix B) and copies of the prepared study scenarios and guiding interview questions (Appendix A), was circulated to all executive and administrative and three instructional members of the college. In that cover letter I outlined the focus and intent of the research and participant roles. I stated that I would treat their responses confidentially and would uphold anonymity to the extent possible, given that this study was being conducted at only one college. I explained that participants would not be referred to in this study by an alias name nor by their specific title, but rather that their responses would be grouped with others in broad occupational sectors, such as executive officer, administrator, or instructor. I noted that participation in the study was voluntary. The 12 people who received invitations agreed to participate in the study.

Method of obtaining data. Data were collected from participants in interview sessions. Because respondents were given the four scenarios and guiding questions along with the invitation to participate in the study, they had the interview guide prior to taking part in an interview with the researcher. They had the option of discussing all study scenarios or only those which, because of their direct experience, they wished to address. Prior to the interview, all respondents signed a consent form (Appendix C) that reiterated the stances on confidentiality and anonymity outlined in the invitation to participate and also affirmed that their participation was voluntary and would not place them in any more risk of being physically or mentally harmed than they encounter in their everyday lives at the college. In addition, participants were told that they would have an opportunity to review what the researcher had written and that they could instruct her to omit any information that they did not want included in the study. The

consent form also included the statement that participants had the right to withdraw from the research without penalty or risk of any kind at any time.

In total, 12 interviews were conducted as follows: three with executive officers, six with college administrators; and three with instructors. People in the executive officer and administrator positions are decision makers and direction setters; hence the study focussed on this group. In addition three instructors were included because this group is also involved in collaborating with college leaders in making decisions in areas that would affect them. The 12 respondents, taken in entirety, were a cross-representation of all college sectors.

The interviews were held in the offices of participants and ranged in time from one hour to three hours, with the majority of interviews taking about two hours. All interviews were audiotaped. This research activity related to Morgan's (1997b) Research Injunction 3 concerning the documentation process. He noted that "the ethnographic researcher seeks to create a rich description of what is said and happening and of his or her experience of the situation. These data then provide the raw material for developing an evolving 'reading' of what is happening" (p. 301). However, Morgan also noted that the reason he described his research approach as "quasi ethnographic" was that "while it tries to document and understand the situations being encountered as fully and richly as possible, it is not always able to produce the 'thick descriptions' on which pure ethnography is based" (p. 303).

Understanding metaphors of organization. An essential step in using the metaphorical method is to acquire an in-depth understanding of the eight images of organization developed by Morgan (1986, 1997a). Within those images, organizational theories from the orthodox to the more radical are presented. The metaphors are instrumental in organizing theories into groupings of shared points of view that are more easily retained and recalled because each metaphor provides a familiar base upon which new ideas are constructed. On the other hand, because some of the metaphorical

labels chosen by Morgan for the eight images of organization are everyday terms for most people, the metaphors bring with them some preconceived meanings. In order to benefit fully from the work, I think people who intend to use Morgan's *Images of Organization* would benefit from taking the time and effort to understand thoroughly the metaphors that he has presented, rather than assuming that they reflect a predetermined understanding.

Analyzing the data. I listened to the audiotapes of the 12 interviews on two separate occasions and tried to discern images of organization from participants' comments. However, too much information came at me at once, and because I was a novice at recognizing organizational characteristics associated with Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical views, I was not successful at identifying college images.

Therefore, I transcribed all 12 interviews verbatim and created a hard copy of participants' comments. Then I read each transcript, focusing on one metaphor of organization at a time, in order to maintain my focus solely on one view. I coded what appeared to me to be representations of each of the eight metaphors in the transcripts. In this manner, after eight separate readings of the 12 interview transcripts containing the four study scenarios, I had associated participants' comments with each of the images of organization. In this way I practiced "reading" organization by "seeing" different dimensions of each study scenario. For me this was a beneficial learning activity and was an important stage in refining the "art" of understanding organization.

Synthesizing the data. Next, I read through the transcripts yet another eight times to identify themes within each metaphorical view for each of the study scenarios. I copied and grouped participants' comments into those themes, and this served as the outline upon which framing organizational contexts was then written and presented in Chapter III of this study. It was at this point that I realized that only 11 of the 12 interviews contained data that were usable. One respondent was so guarded in the

interview session that the comments did not relate clearly to any of the metaphorical images or to themes that emerged through comments of the other respondents.

Implementing Morgan's Method of Reflective Reading

In this phase of the research, diagnostic readings and critical evaluations were undertaken. These steps involve additional interpretation and analysis.

Diagnostic reading. Morgan's (1997a) method suggests a holistic description of the situation be developed from the various points of view, and this he calls a *diagnostic reading*. Morgan worked with case studies to demonstrate how to undertake diagnostic readings. In this study, the organizational contexts presented in Chapter III equate to case studies (pp. 355-361). The purpose of diagnostic readings is "to gain as comprehensive an understanding as possible" (p. 359) of the organization under study. It is important to "remain in an open-minded mode" (p. 360) throughout the diagnostic reading in an attempt to avoid premature evaluation of the organization. Organizational traits emerge throughout the course of "reading" the organization. These are then summarized in brief descriptive statements about the organization from the points of view related to each relevant metaphor. Once these descriptive statements have been developed and documented, some of the images of organization appear more dominant than others. At this point, the critical evaluation part of the reflective reading is undertaken.

Critical evaluation. The outcome of a critical evaluation is a type of *storyline*. The storyline identifies possible future activities that make sense given the desired direction of the organization, its present state, and the point of view brought to the evaluation by the person conducting the evaluation. Evaluations are always undertaken from various views, and persons undertaking this phase must be clear on the view they are assuming prior to undertaking the critical evaluation. For example, Morgan (1986, 1997a) acted as an organizational consultant. In this study, I also assumed the role of an

organizational consultant for this particular portion of the research. The purpose of a critical evaluation is to write a storyline suggesting developmental activities that relate to particular metaphorical views. The storylines can be authored by a group of people or by one person. To me, the storyline serves as a catalyst for decision makers to use as input into their development of directions and strategies.

Subjectivity

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested that

> although we cannot absolutely specify what the sufficient conditions are for this to occur, we believe that the conditions relate to a personal encounter with self in the course of research. Aware that there is something to seek, to uncover, and to understand about yourself, you are ready to be informed through the research experience. (p. 101)

Morgan (1997b) noted that in research of this nature, "even though there may be no predetermined hypotheses to test, the researcher-facilitator inevitably brings frames of reference to the research and formulates broad ideas or 'readings' of what is happening" (p. 302). To deal with this, he developed "a somewhat arbitrary distinction between three classes of data" (p. 302). *Class 1 data* refers to "so-called objective facts of a situation" (p. 302), that although socially constructed, are areas that most people would agree "are pertinent to understanding the situation and its history" (p. 302). Examples of Class 1 data in this research are the written college documents that accompanied the scenarios, such as collaborative governance principles, curriculum recommendations, and mission statement; and information about size of the college. *Class 2 data* "represent all social constructions of reality other than above" (p. 302) and are collected "through conversations and interviews and what people *say* about situations, about other people, and about how they interpret what is happening" (p. 302). Morgan noted that this is how organizational realities are constructed on a daily basis, and "it also shapes how the reality of a situation is constructed *for the*

researcher" (p. 302). Class 2 data are found in this study in the interview transcriptions. *Class 3 data* "represent *the researcher's* social constructions of reality" (p. 302). Examples of these data are found in the framing organizational contexts and reflective reading sections of this study.

By identifying these classes of data, Morgan (1997b) endeavored to "minimize researcher bias and premature interpretation" (p. 303). He advised that in his own research he tried "to absorb all the Class 1 and Class 2 data" (p. 303) that he could by observing, listening, and taking copious notes. He also recorded his own interpretations (Class 3 data) of situations, sometimes "in the margin of Class 2 notes" (p. 303). Using these techniques, then, Morgan, and others using his process, can "produce a rich description of the situation" (p. 303), along with accurate records of the researcher's "own thoughts and interpretations" (p. 303). As Morgan noted, in this manner, researchers are able to trace their "influence throughout the course of the whole intervention" (p. 303). Speaking on a personal note, Morgan asserted that "this helps me to be conscious of the distinctions between my view of the situation and the interpretations of others and to understand when and why I am exerting an influence in one direction or another" (p. 303).

In the following I outline areas where my personal views and interpretations have influenced my reading of the organization under study and also of Morgan's (1997b) process.

1. I focus on trying to understand rather than trying to be certain in my academic, professional, and personal life, which situates me in the realm of qualitative research rather than quantitative. I subscribe to interpretivist notions and tend to reject positivistic notions. I do not believe that anyone owns the truth in the social sciences, but I do believe that all persons have a right to be understood. In this study, I endeavored to understand organizational contexts; however, the interpretation of those contexts is solely mine. Although reactions to the findings were invited from study

participants, the study focussed not on the outcome of the analysis, but rather on the application and assessment of the process.

2. I think that it was possible to engage intellectually with each of the eight metaphorical views of organization as outlined by Morgan (1986, 1997a) in *Images of Organization*, regardless of my own personal beliefs. I accept, however, that my reading of the situations will be my own and will reflect as much about me as a person and my biases as the analysis will reflect of the organization under study.

3. I attest that the need to understand multiple points of view motivated this research, and because that need developed during my earlier contract work with the organization participating in this study, I returned to that organization to extend my analysis of its makeup. I hoped that through this research, I, and possibly the participants who provided comment and read the analysis, could acquire some insight into the social construction of the institution.

4. I developed the scenarios in order to provide a space within which study participants could reflect on well-known activities at the college. The guiding questions encouraged people to consider how the activities had affected them. In this way an attempt was made to avoid leading participants to consider any one particular attribute of the scenario and to give them an opportunity to express what they felt was most meaningful in their own experiences.

Trustworthiness. The study participants reviewed Chapter III, where interview quotations are cited, as well as Chapter IV, which summarizes college characteristics and suggests possible future actions. Participants were asked to confirm that their comments had been used in the appropriate context and to react to the findings, readings, and storylines in Chapters III and IV. General comments were received verbally from participants, and are noted in Chapter VI.

No claim is made in this study that the "reading" of this organization is generalizable in any manner. Should any generalizability exist, it would be in the form

of resonance that may occur to persons who read this study and think the situation described might apply to some of their own experiences. In this study, the readings and diagnoses of situations were developed by the researcher as a foundation upon which to learn metaphorical "reading" of organization and were subsequently shared with participants and their reactions invited.

A summary of research methodology for Part 1 of the study has been provided. The phases related to developing study scenarios and question sets and framing organizational contexts were developed by me, and the phase related to implementing Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of reflective reading was based on my understanding of Morgan's process which involves diagnostic reading and critical evaluation. The overall research method in Part 1 is based on Morgan's (1997b) research method and protocols (pp. 300-312).

Part 2

Part 2 comprised an exploration of metaphor-paradigm relationships in an effort to understand basic foundations of the metaphorical images of organization. Using Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*, an effort was made to broadly categorize the metaphors found in *Images of Organization* (Morgan, 1986, 1997a) into paradigms that reflect shared assumptions. A basic analysis, augmented by information found in the literature, resulted in suggestions regarding the foundations of metaphors and, subsequently, the foundations of the organization under study. Part 2 of the study is presented in Chapter V of this dissertation.

The study methods are provided in greater detail at the beginnings of Chapters III, IV, and V.

Significance of the Study

The study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it yields insight into the contribution of Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization* method in relation to conducting and learning about organizational analysis. In addition, the study endeavored to deepen the understanding of organization by exploring metaphor-paradigm relationships.

The study has practical significance to the extent that the researcher's observations on the metaphorical method of organizational analysis and its use provide others who wish to use the method with additional understanding.

The research has additional practical significance because some insight into underlying assumptions and schools of thought at the core of some college activities is outlined, and should members of the college review the method and outcomes of the study, they could determine for themselves the usefulness of such a diagnostic process within their organization.

Conclusion

The study was motivated by a desire to understand assumptions that underlie how people perceive and take action in their world. Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization* method of organizational analysis provided the researcher with a process for approaching this strong interest area.

The study is presented in two parts. Part 1 of the research focusses on applying Gareth Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of organizational "reading," diagnosis, and evaluation. The analysis, guided by Morgan's quasi-ethnographic, metaphorical method, was conducted in a college and was founded on comments made by 11 study participants in relation to four study scenarios. Part 1 is presented in Chapters III and IV.

Part 2 attempts to look beneath the metaphorical views to discover some of their root assumptions. The metaphor-paradigm exploration was based on Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisation Analysis,* and on additional writings by Morgan. Part 2 is presented in Chapter 5.

The researcher does not purport to be an authority on Morgan and his work; neither does this study present a detailed analysis of his work. Rather, it provides some insight into how Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical method for organizational analysis was used and can be used in bringing understanding to day-to-day operations in an organization. The study also endeavored to understand the foundations of each metaphor by relating the metaphorical images to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) sociological paradigms.

Organization of Remainder of Thesis

Chapter II, Review of the Literature, focuses on a review of Morgan's (1986, 1997a) eight metaphorical *Images of Organization*, and provides an introduction to metaphor as a catalyst for thought and learning about organizations.

Chapter III, Framing Organizational Contexts, describes the degree to which the eight images of organization were apparent in comments and opinions expressed by persons who participated in this study.

Chapter IV, Reflective Reading of Four Scenarios, provides diagnostic readings and critical evaluations for each of the four scenarios used in this study. One diagnostic reading was prepared for each scenario to depict features of the organization at the time of this study. A critical evaluation was prepared for each scenario that pieced together a storyline of possible future directions for the organization.

Chapter V, Metaphor-Paradigm Relationships, explores the base assumptions that underlie each of the eight metaphorical views of organization.

Chapter VI, Overview, Observations, and Implications, comprises a summation of study observations and findings.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides an introduction to the use of metaphor as an analytical catalyst to organizational analysis and an overview of the eight metaphorical views found in *Images of Organization* (Morgan, 1986, 1997a).

Use of Metaphor as an Analytical Catalyst

Morgan (1997a, 1997b) used metaphors as catalysts for helping people to see any organization from a variety of perspectives. In the following, I touch upon aspects of metaphor to enhance familiarity with it and to help in understanding how it fits with this study. First, I review the place of metaphor in language and living; second, I outline some of Morgan's views on the nature of metaphor; and, third, I introduce some opinions on using metaphor in organizational analysis.

The Place of Metaphor in Language and Living

Emerson (as cited in Pugh, Hicks, Davis, and Venstra, 1992) described *language* as "fossil poetry" comprising "strata of metaphors that have been embedded over time, so that virtually everything we say has a metaphorical record" (p. 3). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) observed, "Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (p. 3). Similarly, Taylor (1984) suggested that metaphor is "a ubiquitous feature of our thinking and discourse" and "the basis of the conceptual systems by means of which we understand and act within our worlds" (p. 5). All of these writers suggested that metaphor is deeply implicated in, if not the fount of, our conceptual engagement with our world.

Metaphors help people identify with and recognize multiple meanings encountered in life. This notion was affirmed in Paul G. Muscari's (as cited in Pugh et al., 1992) work *The Metaphor in Science and in the Science Classroom:*

> The metaphor is invested with the extraordinary power of invoking multiple perspectives. By shifting the focus from the central to the peripheral limits of language, metaphors can jockey around with established categories and rule-governing procedures to allow new saliencies to arise. By dislodging us from fixed conceptual schemes, metaphors are prime for helping us place our impressions into newly fashioned units of meaning. (p. 78)

Both Black (as cited in Taylor, 1984) and Ortony (1977) emphasized relatedness between two notions when working with metaphor. This relatedness, however, may well bring to the foreground aspects of one notion that would otherwise have remained in the background. Indeed, by spotlighting an aspect that in accepted, everyday practice would have remained in the shadows, people are presented with information and concepts that, when paid attention to, heighten their awareness of elements that play an active role in their experiences. People are given an opportunity to review the makeup of their reality.

Some metaphors make a better contribution to understanding ideas and producing the "eureka" effect than others. Ortony (1977) said: "The power of metaphor comes from its inability to be paraphrased" (p. 9). A good metaphor should be rich and complex enough to evoke multiple meanings. Further, it should summon forth thoughts that concern two subjects, resulting in a meaning where at least one of these meanings is new.

Ortony (1977) noted:

> Good metaphors can literally lead to reasoning by analogy which can give further insight into the extent and nature of concept interrelation both in suggesting theoretical tests of hypotheses and in personal world views. An example in the scientific domain would be the comparison of an atom to a solar system, which suggested a new view of atoms, and one that led to innovative experimentation to explore the extent of the analogy. (pp. 13-14)

Metaphors, then, can connect two complex notions, which may lead to new and expanded understandings.

Part of what helps people to judge a metaphor as "good" or not rests in the need that is being met by using metaphor. For example, in the literature two accounts of metaphor were always noted. The first is a comparative view of metaphor, as Aristotle first began to use it, and the second is Black's (as cited in Taylor, 1984) interactive or implicative view. When metaphor is viewed as comparison, for example, it tends to connect two similar and existing notions and becomes an aid for learning by relating new knowledge to old. When viewed as interactive, the metaphor serves to "engender a new way of seeing things" (Ortony, 1977, p. 6) and deals with phenomena that are not easily literally expressed. Both metaphorical functions, comparison and interaction, are important to Morgan (1986, 1997a).

Some of Morgan's Positions on the Nature of Metaphor

Morgan (1997a) contended that "all theories of organization and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that lead us to see, understand, and manage organizations in distinctive yet partial ways" (p. 4). In *Images of Organization*, Morgan emphasized that metaphor is more than a literary embellishment; rather, it is influential in how people learn, think, take action, and communicate. In its broadest sense, and in the way Morgan used metaphor, it provides a way to explain or see something by comparing it with something else familiar and to encourage a basis for expanded, changed, or new understanding.

An important aspect of metaphor that Morgan (1997a) noted is that, although some similarities may be drawn among or between various notions or experiences using metaphor, such as organizations as machines, metaphorical views will always be distinctive and partial. Not all of an organization can be understood in relation to its being like a machine, but considering organization in this way draws attention to

particular aspects upon which a more comprehensive understanding can be developed. Morgan also noted that "metaphor *always* creates distortions" (p. 4). If metaphors are taken literally, they create falsehoods. For example, an organization is not really a machine and could not ever be a series of "inanimate parts" (p. 5). However, by considering organization as machine, insights occur regarding how organizations function to produce products or services. Hence, if a metaphor is taken literally and in totality, it will be misleading. And as Morgan said, "Metaphor is inherently paradoxical. It can create powerful insights that also become distortions, as the way of seeing created through a metaphor becomes a way of *not* seeing" (p. 5). He added that by presenting theory as metaphor, it becomes evident that no single theory can adequately represent or explain the whole of organization.

By introducing metaphorical thinking, one of Morgan's (1997a) aims was "to open dialogue and extend horizons rather than achieve closure around an all-embracing perspective" (p. 8). Metaphor helps people to see characteristics of a phenomenon in a particular way, and in this manner, then, the greater the number of metaphors used in an exploration, the greater the possibilities become for understanding the whole of a phenomenon. The challenge is to integrate the complementary and competing metaphorical views when developing an understanding of a phenomenon. Morgan suggested that metaphor is pervasive in all of our lives. Some of that view is explored in the following section.

Gareth Morgan's (1986) use of metaphor in organizational analysis is premised on the notion that when people critically analyze, they are engaged in a process of interpreting realities. He asserted that

> by building on the use of metaphor—which is basic to our way of thinking generally—that we have a means of enhancing our capacity for creative yet disciplined thought, in a way that allows us to grasp and deal with the many-sided character of organizational life. (p. 17)

Metaphorical thinking makes it possible to understand similarities and dissimilarities between and among things, to gain insight into the complexity of phenomena, to see partial "truths" and guard against "distortions," and to experience multiple and new ways of "seeing." Metaphor is not used just by poets to transfer thoughts or provide a richness of understanding, but it is used also by all people every day to learn, communicate, and take action. Other writers, such as Clegg and Gray (1996), agreed with Morgan that metaphors are highly useful, in this case, to the researcher. In their words, "Metaphors are inevitable and useful. They are not embellishments. No pure space exists outside their spell. They are part of our craft. They form our life as researchers. Without them we would be nowhere that we could know" (p. 91).

Morgan (1986, 1997a, 1997b) proposed metaphors as a way to help people *think* in new ways. He emphasized throughout his work in *Images of Organization* and in *Imaginization* that metaphor will provide a partial view, will create insights, may distort and will have strengths and limitations; but that thinking metaphorically is creative and will provide opportunities to appreciate organizational complexity. Using metaphor, people may recognize aspects of their organization that are worthy of question, they may place old problems in a new light, and they may have an opportunity to express deeply held values and perceptions that otherwise would be difficult to declare. Morgan introduced and encouraged others to use metaphor as a catalyst for *thought*, and that is one of his notable contributions to the study of organizational analysis.

Morgan perceived his overall process using metaphor as an inherent human activity. In an interview with Joe Katzman (1996), he said,

> People have a natural tendency to generate images and metaphors that reframe situations with which they are dealing. People don't recognize it, though. And they don't take it seriously. If you start to point it out they often dismiss it saying, 'Ah, that's just a metaphor—it's an analogy.' They dismiss it. People are quite skilled in using images and metaphors. The challenge is, how do you get them to be more open to the process and take it seriously and do it

> systematically? When they do, it flows. The acquisition of experience rests on our ability to develop this skill that we all possess to some degree. (Katzman, 1996)

Whether people are aware of it or not, all use metaphor every day. However, many people are not accustomed to thinking that metaphor could be used in such activities as organizational analysis. Some observations and concerns follow.

Use of Metaphor in Organizational Analysis

As is apparent above, from one point of view metaphor helps generate meaning and the discovery of new perspectives through the process of comparing "a relatively unknown subject" (Grant & Oswick, 1996, p. 2) with "a relatively familiar subject" (p. 2). From another point of view, metaphors can be misleading if used inappropriately in drawing comparisons and can also be considered imprecise because their effects cannot be measured.

One of the debates related to the role of metaphor in organizational analysis stems from a need to *understand* compared with a need to be *certain*. That is, on an interpretive and radical humanist plane, in relation to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) sociological paradigms, consideration is given to which phenomena could be included in a boundary of understanding; whereas in the functionalist and radical structuralist planes there is a need to draw boundaries around defined phenomena and "to locate, fix and name elements of experience" (Morgan, 1983, p. 606). The heart of this debate centers around truth and reality. From an objectivist, functionalist perspective, a word must be able to describe something literally if it is going to describe something true or real. A metaphor used in a sentence or in a concept to suggest something similar, then, cannot be regarded as a statement containing any truth or reality. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) reflected on this thinking in the following way:

> We can now see why there have been within philosophy two long-standing views about the nature of metaphor. Since concepts must be able to accurately fit the world as it really is in itself, there can be no such thing as metaphorical

> concepts. All there can be are metaphorical uses of language. Those uses can be either (1) indirectly literal, in that their meaning must be reducible to literal concepts, or else (2) meaninglessly fanciful, in that they do not express literal ideas at all and thus have no meaning, but are only flights of the imagination. (p. 122)

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) suggested that people who deny metaphor a role in understanding truth and reality are either objectivists or antiliteralists, the latter being those who do not entertain any role for metaphor in representing truth or reality. They countered such propositions by positing that "metaphor is centrally a matter of thought, not just words" (p. 123) because if metaphors were just words, then there would be no possible cross domain sharing of meaning; each word would be a different metaphor. When Morgan used various metaphors to highlight characteristics of organizations, he was not using metaphor in a literal sense. His whole purpose was to encourage thought about organization, and to do this he initiated what Lakoff and Johnson (1999) called *cross-domain mapping*, which involves using concepts to think about other concepts. The act of thinking about concepts in this way creates mapping—ontological cross-domain mapping, because before the metaphorical thinking experience, there were no literal similarities among the concepts being considered. Further, the contention that metaphor is primarily poetic, is opposite to the trenchant works of Lakoff and Johnson, who provided ample examples that metaphor is used every day in common communication and learning.

Another issue related to using metaphor for organizational analysis focuses on the manner in which metaphors make meaning. This debate concerns itself with whether or not a metaphor has conventional or idiosyncratic bases. Mangham (1996) suggested that some metaphors are based on everyday conventionalized knowledge and meaning, such as organizations as machines or organisms, whereas other metaphors, such as organizations as spider plants or as psychic prisons, simply "do not hit chords, nor do they resonate, since they are not widely conventionalized in everyday

expression" (p. 31). Having made his point, Mangham acquiesced that an organization as a psychic prison

> manifests a richness of knowledge and inference that allows for considerable development . . . [because] even though it may presently fail to resonate with the everyday experience of a large number of people, . . . to the extent that we readily talk about repression, denial, rationalization, sublimation, and the like, the process may be well underway. (p. 32)

This concern may hearken back to the notion that words are verbal symbols used to communicate historically created conventionalized meaning, and that words chosen in the absence of such regard may not support natural cross-domain mapping and may require prompting to ensure that some connection is made among concepts. Mangham's issue, then, is that basic metaphors are "central to our understanding of ourselves and our relations with the world" (p. 35), and they cannot be randomly invented but rather must, through use, acquire meaning. Mangham noted:

> The more basic a conceptual metaphor is, the more it will be systematically connected to other metaphors and the more implications it will have for the way that we think. . . . I have attempted to show that good writers, far from inventing new metaphors, illuminate our minds and our practices by extending, elaborating, questioning and compositing basic, everyday, conventional, conceptual metaphors. I believe that I have shown that while there may indeed be no (or few) limits to one-shot, image metaphors, there are likely to be limits to the invention of basic, everyday, conventional, conceptual metaphors. (p. 35)

Mangham (1996) suggested that the one-shot, image metaphors may indeed help conjure similarities between concepts and hence result in fodder for thought; however, these thoughts may be short-lived because they have not yet entered our conventionalized space. They may, then, momentarily detract our attention from "the need (if need there is) to fundamentally reconceive our world" (p. 35).

Morgan (1996) responded:

> Iain Mangham's argument is profoundly conservative. We are advised to confine our attention to the deep conventional structures of meaning, because that's where substantial analysis must focus. But where do the conventional meanings come from, if not from what was once regarded as an idiosyncratic way of looking at the world? (p. 237)

Morgan (1996) continued to explain that some people with whom he had worked had indeed gained insights concerning their organizations from using idiosyncratic metaphors. Although they differed on the type of metaphor to be used, both Mangham (1996) and Morgan shared a commitment to furthering understanding of organization using metaphor. And on that basis, taking metaphor to a personal level where meaning is created, only the people using any particular metaphor can comment on whether they gained insight and altered their way of seeing and acting. Some metaphors may be useful because of where we have been and who we are today, whereas others may be useful because of where we might go and who we might become.

Overview of Morgan's Eight Metaphors for Viewing Organization

In the following, Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphors are introduced, and an overview is provided of the strengths and weaknesses that he identified for each metaphorical view. The review is detailed in order that readers of this thesis have a grounding with regard to the images used in this study. In this way, perhaps readers of this study will be in a better position to relate to the organizational analysis undertaken.

In *Images of Organization,* Morgan (1986, 1997a) organized eight metaphorical images of organizations: machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination.

The Mechanistic Metaphor

Morgan (1986) contended that

> organizations are rarely established as ends in themselves. They are instruments created to achieve other ends. This is reflected in the origins of the word organization, which derives from the Greek *organon*, meaning a tool or instrument. No wonder, therefore, that ideas about tasks, goals, aims, and objectives have become such fundamental organizational concepts. For tools and instruments are mechanical devices invented and developed to aid in performing some kind of goal-oriented activity. (p. 23)

The mechanistic point of view became a tangible and deeply entrenched reality over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. This is a stance found in most organizations that were established 20 or more years ago and is a way that many people have lived, whether they are conscious of it or not. Indeed, its influence has been and remains so pervasive that many people today perpetuate mechanistic thinking without knowing the roots of their actions.

The primary type of organizational structure associated with the mechanistic world view is bureaucracy, because in its purest form it replicates many machine-like characteristics. In his considerations of bureaucracy as an idealized construct, German sociologist Max Weber (as cited in Morgan, 1997a) "observed the parallels between the mechanization of industry and the proliferation of bureaucratic forms of organization" (p. 17) early in the 20th century:

> In his [Weber's] work we find the first comprehensive definition of bureaucracy as a form of organization that emphasizes precision, speed, clarity, regularity, reliability, and efficiency achieved through the creation of a fixed division of tasks, hierarchical supervision, and detailed rules and regulations. (p. 17)

Management theories connected with the mechanistic world view include classical management, "focused on the design of the total organization" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 17) and scientific management, "focused on the design and management of individual jobs" (p. 17). Classical management is found in the work of such theorists as Henri Fayol,

F. W. Mooney, and Col. Lyndall Urwick, who used engineering and militaristic principles and who were advocates of bureaucratic organization. Hence, this management approach includes top-down power and control, "subordination of individual interest to general interest" (Morgan, 1986, p. 26), and the establishment of hierarchies and classes of workers in master-servant relationships. Some examples of recent-day classical management techniques include management by objectives (MBO); planning, programming, budgeting systems (PPBS); and business process re-engineering (BPR).

Scientific management is exemplified in Frederick Taylor's principles relating to how work is performed. In this approach, jobs are typically broken down into functional parts, each with specific and well-defined purposes. Staff members are expected to perform work in a systematic, repetitive, and robotic or programmed fashion. They are the "tools" and "instruments" of the organization; and precision, standardization, reliability, and productivity are expected from staff just as they are expected from machines. When all staff work as they should, like well-oiled and well-designed machines, smooth and consistent completion of the organization's tasks are anticipated. Workers are not encouraged to think about processes for getting work done; rather, they are expected to follow the procedures and routines devised by management.

Strengths and Limitations

Morgan (1997a) provided a brief critique of when mechanistic organization is appropriate and when it is not appropriate. He presented these ideas as strengths and limitations:

> The strengths can be stated very simply. Mechanistic approaches to organization work well only under conditions where machines work well: (a) when there is a straightforward task to perform; (b) when the environment is stable enough to ensure that the products produced will be appropriate ones; (c) when one wishes to produce exactly the same product time and again; (d) when precision is at a

> premium; and (e) when the human "machine" parts are compliant and behave as they have been designed to do. (p. 27)

The limitations are the converse of the strengths. Morgan (1997a) stated:

> Mechanistic approaches to organization often have severe limitations. In particular they (a) can create organizational forms that have great difficulty in adapting to changing circumstances; (b) can result in mindless and unquestioning bureaucracy; (c) can have unanticipated and undesirable consequences as the interests of those working in the organization take precedence over the goals the organization was designed to achieve; and (d) can have dehumanizing effects upon employees, especially those at the lower levels of the organizational hierarchy. (p. 28)

In the foregoing, Morgan (1997a) tended to critique the strengths and limitations of mechanistic organization, rather than focusing on the strengths and limitations of *using* the mechanistic metaphor as a way to view organization.

From my point of view, a strength of using the mechanistic metaphor to view organization is that it clarifies the thinking behind bureaucratic structure and operation. In this way, it emphasizes that a major reason for creating an organization is to achieve certain ends; it seems to me that that aspect of organization is one that will endure regardless of time and place. Another strength of the metaphor is that it serves as a reminder that every construct designed and produced by people will have multiple effects on people. That is, in a dialectical way of thinking, viewing organizations through a mechanistic lens serves as an example and a reminder of how every solution creates new problems. Weber (as cited in Morgan, 1997a) was able to identify some of the consequences of organizing people in mechanistic ways. Have we thought of the consequences of weaving today's technology into our lives? What seems to be a panacea today may be a problem tomorrow.

A limitation of this metaphor is that it tends to suggest rather strongly that people are treated like parts of a machine and as though they have no thinking or problem-solving role to play in the organization. Metaphors force certain ways of seeing and force other aspects out of the picture. The way that people can be

stereotyped in the mechanistic metaphor is an example of the "extremes" that can be experienced when looking at situations using one metaphor at a time.

A general overall limitation of using metaphor that working with this "first" metaphor brings to light is that although time and place are generally considered insofar as when the related theories were popularized, we may think that because that time is past, the ideas may not now apply to our current time period. Yet, we might continue to think about the following message:

> We designed machines to do what we do better,
> and then designed work to fit into the machines.
> We designed them and they designed us.

The Organic Metaphor

In this view the underlying metaphor is a biological one, where organization takes on the characteristics of a living organism. Beginning in the late 1920s, more and more attention was paid to considering the needs of people within organizations and the relationships of the organization with its environments. Much of the theory and practice borne of the organic view of organization is based on recognizing the need for living organisms to develop, change, and survive, given their various relationships with and definitions of environment and human need. Theories related to an organic view of the world include human resource management theory, systems theory, contingency theory, population ecology theory, and organizational ecology theory. Each of these is explored in the following review.

Human Resource Management Theory

The well-known Hawthorne Studies conducted at the Western Electric Company in Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s found that the formal organization viewed and designed through a mechanistic lens provided only a technical rendition of the

organizational story. Within that formal "technical" organization was an informal "social" organization created by the workers.

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, an interlocked sociotechnical dimension of organization became the focal point for organizational psychologists such as Chris Argyris, Frederick Herzberg, and Douglas McGregor. They still focussed on the need to get work done efficiently and effectively, but added considerations relating to people as resources and finding ways to help workers feel valued, involved, and responsible.

Human resource management principles recognize that staff whose own developmental needs are met will be motivated to turn their energies, intellect, and creativity into contributing to the organization's activities in a positive way. Human resource management theory, which combines the technical needs of the organization with the human needs of workers, is very much a part of organizational design today.

Systems Theory

"The systems approach builds on the principle that organizations, like organisms, are 'open' to their environment and must achieve an appropriate relation with that environment if they are to survive" (Morgan, 1986, pp. 44-45). Organizations as organisms are not closed, self-sufficient systems like machines, but rather respond to a larger system, that being the contextual environment within which the organization exists. Similarly, the organization itself is made up of a number of subsystems in the form of departments and groups or classes of employees, associations, or unions. Thus, it is reasonable for members of an organization to undertake activities to identify what is present in the environment that could impact on the survival and growth of the organization. Scanning the environments, whether they are considered contextually in an external or internal sense, is what systems theory encourages. As a result of that

scanning, organizations can adapt to or modify their composition and activities to maximize their strengths and opportunities and minimize their weaknesses and threats.

Contingency Theory

With the realization that organizations exist within changing environments came the realization that there was no longer only one right way to function, unless there was only one static environment. Rather, changing situations called for their own unique responses. Hence, rigidity in operation does not work well in an organic world, whereas flexibility and adaptability do. Organizations that are "market or environment driven" (Morgan, 1986, p. 56) turn to contingencies. Referring to work done by Burns and Stalker and by Woodward, Morgan contended that the following describes "the essence of modern contingency theory":

> Their [Burns and Stalker's] study emphasized that successful adaptation of organization to environment depended on the ability of top management to interpret the conditions facing the firm in an appropriate manner, and to adopt relevant courses of action. Both these studies [Burns and Stalker's and Woodward's] thus demonstrated that in the process of organizing a lot of choices have to be made, and were at one in suggesting that effective organization depends on achieving a balance or compatibility between strategy, structure, technology, the commitments and needs of people, and the external environment. (p. 54)

In short, contingency theory focuses on organizations developing "good fits" with their environments. This theory works well provided that resources for survival can be found in the environment and that organizations can adapt. Population ecology views, however, usher in a reminder of the force of environments and the possibility that environments may change to the extent that some organizations cannot adapt or find resources necessary for survival and therefore may become extinct.

Population Ecology Theory

The population ecology view is premised on the notion that species are dependent on the environment to provide resources necessary for survival. When resources are abundant, most organizational species can survive; when resources become scarce, organizations must be able to compete for the needed resources, and only the fittest survive. Innovation becomes important so that new organizations, congruent with the environment, can develop. But how long will the fittest survive? When an organization cannot adapt and cannot find resources to sustain it, then it ceases to be.

Organization Ecology Theory

Unlike contingency or population ecology theory where organizations and environments are viewed as separate entities, organization ecology reframes thinking to consider how organizations are a part of an ecosystem. As such, organizations evolve along with the system, and rather than the environment having to contend with "independent external forces" (Morgan, 1986, p. 70), the environment becomes "in some measure always negotiated" (p. 70). When considering an ecosystem, one realizes that there are many organizations within it, not just one. The next realization is that, rather than competing for resources, organizations may commit to "the ethic of collaboration" (p. 70) in order to influence the shape of the environment. Examples of this include "formal and informal cartels for price fixing, agreements regarding areas of competition and market sharing, and the joint sponsorship of lobbies designed to influence government legislation" (p. 70). In this way solutions to shared problems are found. Today, many companies are merging, collaborating, and partnering in direct response to changing and turbulent environments.

In summary, the organic metaphor broadens views of organization. The needs of people and the wholeness of people enter the story; the realization that organizations are

either surrounded by an environment or are part of an environmental pattern comes to light; the idea that people contribute to the making of an environment and ought not to be fashioned to fit a rigid and defined environment is introduced; and the notion that species of organizations may become extinct, adapt, or evolve as part of a negotiated environment is raised.

Strengths and Limitations

All metaphors provide a partial way of seeing organization. Morgan (1997a) summarized the strengths of the organic metaphor as follows: (a) It places an emphasis on "understanding relations between organizations and their environments" (p. 67) by recognizing that organizations are open systems, not closed; (b) it focuses on managing processes in an open system to ensure organizational survival amidst changing environments, rather than focusing only on achieving operational goals in a closed system; (c) it helps develop an appreciation for the complexity of organization and the need to work toward a coherent interaction of strategic, structural, technological, and "human and managerial dimensions of organization" (p. 67) in relation to their internal and external environments; (d) it raises the metaphor of organizational "species," which suggests that more than one type of organization can exist within an environment, and, as such, organizations can make choices about how to ensure their survival by competing to be the fittest or ensure their survival by collaborating with others to fit into the environment; and (e) it stresses the capacity of organizations to become flexible and innovative by changing along with the environments of which they are a part.

For Morgan (1997a) a major limitation of the metaphor is that it encourages a view of organizations that is as concrete and visible as nature itself. Organizations are not that concrete in that they comprise many intangible characteristics, such as "visions, ideas, norms, and beliefs" (p. 69). Because they are "built" on the decisions and

activities of people, organizations are social constructs and not natural phenomena. Morgan put it this way:

> It is misleading to suggest that organizations need to "adapt" to their environment, as do the contingency theorists, or that environments "select" the organizations that are to survive, as do the population ecologists. Both views tend to make organizations and their members dependent upon forces operating in an external world rather than recognizing that they are active agents operating with others in the construction of that world. (p. 69)

Another limitation of using this metaphor to view organization is that it tends to encourage thinking along the lines that "the unity and harmony characteristic of organisms can be achieved in organizational life" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 70) and that organizations are functionally unified with other aspects of their environments. Because organizations are human constructs, they operate on the basis of free will and as a collection of task, career, and personal interests. In these ways, they are not dependent upon other aspects of the environment, nor are other aspects of the environment dependent on the survival of the organization; and they are not necessarily a harmonious part of the environment. When human constructs are paralleled with natural phenomena in a detailed and serious way, difficulties are bound to emerge, because there are distinct differences between the two.

A final limitation identified by Morgan (1997a) was "the danger of the metaphor becoming an ideology. This is always a problem in applied social science where images or theories come to serve as normative guidelines for shaping practice" (p. 71). The danger here is that each metaphor will bring particular organizational characteristics to the foreground, but that short-sighted "seeing" needs to be balanced with the multiple views of the organization that are revealed as each metaphor is used.

The Brain Metaphor

Organizations as brains brings one's thoughts to just that: thoughts—the ability to have, communicate, and act on them! Living systems have capabilities to respond to, adapt to, or help create their environment.

One of the major concepts underlying organizations as brains is one of information processing. Morgan (1986) pointed out that

> organizations are information systems. They are communications systems. And they are decision-making systems. In mechanistic organizations these systems are highly routinized. And in matrix and organic organizations they are more ad hoc and free flowing. We can thus go a long way toward understanding organizations, and the variety of organizational forms in practice, by focusing on their information-processing characteristics. (p. 81)

Bureaucracies tend to pool information and decision making in the contained spaces of hierarchy. Hence, mechanistic fragmentation is replicated. It might be expected, however, that because organic systems work on interdependencies, communication and decision making will be better networked. This leads to a review of cybernetics and the open systems concept of homeostasis.

Cybernetics and Homeostasis

Cybernetics stresses that systems must be able to perform the following four key principles in order to respond to the environment and take appropriate action:

> First, that systems must have the capacity to sense, monitor, and scan significant aspects of their environment. Second, that they must be able to relate this information to the operating norms that guide system behavior. Third, that they must be able to detect significant deviations from these norms. And fourth, that they must be able to initiate corrective action when discrepancies are detected. (Morgan, 1986, pp. 86-87)

This form of information exchange also falls into the open systems concept of *homeostasis*, described by Morgan (1986) as follows:

> The concept of homeostasis refers to self-regulation and the ability to maintain a steady state. Biological organisms seek a regularity of form and distinctness from the environment while maintaining a continuous exchange with that environment. This form and distinctness is achieved through homeostatic processes that regulate and control system operation on the basis of what is now called "negative feedback," where deviations from some standard or norm initiate actions to correct the deviation. Thus when our body temperature rises above normal limits, certain bodily functions operate to try and counteract the rise; e.g., we begin to perspire and breathe heavily. Social systems also require such homeostatic control processes if they are to acquire enduring form. (p. 46)

The notion that there are "norms" and "enduring forms" suggests that information exchange based on cybernetic, homeostatic principles would work to an extent in mechanistic bureaucracies. Management, however, continues to hold the reins on brainpower by being the group responsible for reacting to the environment and setting goals and directions. But they also build aspects of cybernetics and homeostasis into their precise procedures for getting work done by prescribing actions to correct any deviance from the norm. The worker, in this case, continues to be that "instrument" reacting to variances in specified standards and correcting the course as directed in the procedure, policy, regulation, and such.

Insofar as the ability to learn is concerned, cybernetic, homeostatic systems operate on what is called *single-loop learning*, which "rests in an ability to detect and correct error in relation to a given set of operating norms" (Morgan, 1986, p. 88). That is to say, there is no need for staff to embrace double-loop learning, which encourages questioning the appropriateness of established norms; that function would still rest with management. However, the advent of learning to learn by questioning the appropriateness of such existing aspects as organizational direction, processes, structures, and composition relates to double-loop thinking. The concept of requisite variety is one differentiation between mechanistic and organic forms of organization in that it is necessary to have the same variety within the organization as is in the environment. If management tried to "be all things," they would burn out. And so it is

this concept that forces a structure to permit the involvement of staff in problem solving, direction setting, and so on. An element that has not been fully developed, however, in the approaches covered so far, is one of "connectivity."

Holographic Brains

People interested in learning organization models pursue some characteristics similar to *holographic brains*. The notion of connectivity, of being richly joined, is the essence of the view that holography represents. The aim is to enfold the specialties of the organization into all of its parts. The concept is, if organizations were able to achieve the state of holographic-type brains, they would be pliable, cross-functional, and able to organize and reorganize as necessary to sustain survival or reach for self-actualization. These notions are related to the organic organization ecology views in that one is able, or an organization is able, to evolve along with the ecosystem of which it is an integral part, by virtue of the condition that it is so completely entrenched, so entirely subsumed in the ecosystem, that it has the knowledge of all its parts. As such, it is natural that there be a shared response to organizational/environmental conditions. Collaboration is a key feature ensuring the holographic achievement because it suggests that the whole will be greater than its parts. As well, the open systems concept of requisite variety, although suggesting an "external environment," is useful to consider because it emphasizes the need to be as differentiated and as integrated as is one's environment; in other words, at one, or integral to the whole. In Morgan's (1986) words,

> The holographic principle has a great deal running in its favor. For the capacities of the brain are already distributed throughout modern organizations. All the employees have brains, and computers are in essence simulated brains. In this sense, important aspects of the whole are already embodied in the parts. The development of more holographic, brainlike forms of organization thus rests in the realization of a potential that already exists. (p. 97)

In relating the concept of connectivity and holography to organization, it occurs to me that this would not work insofar as loosely coupled networks are concerned because organizational needs are subcontracted out. This divides and separates the whole of the organization's membership. Possibly holographic brains exist within the team at the center.

Viewing organization from a brains perspective brings to mind the interrelatedness of structure, space, and information processing. Unless they are adequately coherent, it appears that a breakdown in one organizational dimension or another would occur. From the relatively mechanistic, myopic, and defined operational parameters of cybernetic information exchange, through to contingency theory and a sensitivity that one may need a variety of responses to deal with changes or variances in one's integrated environment, to the realization that organizations are a holographic, integral, evolving, and knowledgeable part of a larger ecosystem suggest a learning process. The circle of understanding regarding organization has broadened and shifted emphasis from control to accommodation to involvement with organizational "being."

Strengths and Limitations

One of the major strengths of the brains metaphor noted by Morgan (1997a) "is that it identifies the requirements of 'learning organizations' in a comprehensive way and how different elements need to support each other" (p. 116). In terms of time and place, the brains metaphor is of the present. It is not yet clear how the "brains" movement will affect organizations in the long run. However, I think using the metaphor might help in suggesting how social constructs are formed, popularized, and possibly used inappropriately. For example,

> As we shift into what Peter Drucker has described as the new "knowledge economy," where human intelligence, creativity, and insight is the key resource, we can expect the ideas and principles involved in creating brain-like organizations to become more and more a reality. (p. 116)

A difficulty with which I have battled on and off over the years as different trends have come and gone is evaluating the appropriateness of the trend for a particular organization. It almost seems as though people get caught up in "groupthink" as they are drawn into effective marketing campaigns. Hence, one of the strengths of metaphor that occurs to me here is that an awareness of a broad scope of metaphorical views can help people decide whether or not their organization is, reasonably, an accommodating host for a new idea, or whether other metaphorical insights better support their organizational purpose. On this count, however, other implications arise. Would an organization be left behind in a changing and evolving society if it did not participate in the current strong attractor pattern? Would an organization be tempted to stay in its traditional and comfortable space by deciding that the "new" way was not appropriate? All of these sorts of potentials exist. But my concern is that members of an organization may embrace every "flavor of the month," as staff like to call them, without critically judging the merits or demerits of its introduction into an organization.

Another point Morgan (1997a) raised as a strength is that

> the metaphor offers a powerful way of thinking about the implications of new information technology and how it can be used to support the development of learning organizations. Historically, there has been a tendency to use the new technology to reinforce bureaucratic principles and centralized modes of control. As we have seen, this misses the true potential, which rests in creating networks of interaction that can self-organize and be shaped and driven by the intelligence of everyone involved. (p. 116)

A strength of using metaphor to see and not see is that it helps to connect thoughts about things that otherwise might not be connected. Another strength of the brains metaphor that Morgan (1997a) noted is that it has helped to reshape theories of management away from mechanistic rigidities to brainlike self-organizing spaces.

A limitation of the brains metaphor is a result of its being new and developmental. As Morgan (1997a) noted, "There is no coherent image of the brain to which everyone subscribes" (p. 117). Hence, as Morgan developed the brains metaphor,

he summoned other metaphors to help make sense of the view: "images of holograms, mobots, DNA, and other self-organizing phenomena" (p. 117). A *mobot* is a mobile robot.

Another limitation of using the brains metaphor is that "there is a danger of overlooking important conflicts that can arise between learning and self-organization, on the one hand, and the realities of power and control, on the other" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 117). In bureaucratic, hierarchical organizations, the traditional power structures could be threatened by self-organizing, autonomous working groups. Furthermore, as Morgan noted, "The process of learning requires a degree of openness and self-criticism that is foreign to traditional modes of management" (p. 117).

Managers may not be comfortable with creating an environment where employees can self-organize. Having to let go of power and control and allow self-organizing groups to develop their own hierarchical orders may be outside the domain of traditional managers. The form of hierarchy and control that emerges in self-organizing groups is not the traditional type that could be "predesigned and imposed" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 118). As noted earlier, the brains metaphor is still being imagined and created in organizations.

The Cultural Metaphor

> Shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sense making are all different ways of describing culture. In talking about culture we are really talking about a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways. These patterns of understanding also provide a basis for making one's own behavior sensible and meaningful. (Morgan, 1986, p. 128)

Organizational culture, as viewed by Morgan (1986), is a composite of the values, beliefs, and behaviors found in the predominant national culture, in varying professional cultures, and in organizational structure and experience. Given that these

aspects contribute to organizational cultural development, each will be reviewed in this introduction to the cultural metaphor.

In order to illustrate how national cultures influence organizational culture, Morgan (1986) contrasted parts of the cultures of Japan and the United States. He noted that Japanese people viewed the organization as "a collectivity to which employees belong, rather than just a workplace comprising separate individuals" (p. 114). People work together in a collaborative, interdependent, and sharing manner. The metaphor of the family can be used to describe Japanese work ethics and practices.

On the other hand, in the United States the metaphor of "playing the game" can be used to describe the way people approach work. They want to be winners and competitors, and rewarded for the appropriate behavior that leads to success. They set their game plan in the form of strategies and objectives and set out to make it happen. As Morgan (1986) noted, "If we turn to the United States for illustrations of how culture shapes management, the ethic of competitive individualism is probably the one that stands out most clearly" (p. 119). These examples suggest that behaviors shaped in the early years of our lives by a national cultural environment are subsequently reflected in norms, standards, and expectations that are lived out in work relationships.

Professional cultures play an important role in shaping organizational culture. Each profession internalizes values, beliefs, and practices that serve as guides to behavior. Such cultures are so distinct that people around the world, as members of particular occupations, can find shared meaning and understanding. As Morgan (1986) noted, "Many of the major cultural similarities and differences in the world today are occupational rather than national" (p. 113).

National and professional cultures influence the creation of organizational culture. In addition, organizational culture is spun out of organizational experiences and structures. For example, some organizations have stories that illustrate and pass on values and beliefs. Organizational heroes and heroines portray admirable

characteristics. Rituals and ceremonies particular to the organization also serve to enforce the organization's culture. And, "organizational structure, rules, policies, goals, missions, job descriptions, and standardized operating procedures . . . act as primary points of reference for the way people think about and make sense of the contexts in which they work" (Morgan, 1986, p. 132).

Strengths and Limitations

According to Morgan (1997a) a major strength of the culture metaphor is that it draws attention to "almost every aspect of organizational life" (p. 146) that collectively creates the shared organization ethos. These aspects include such things as "structures, hierarchies, rules, or organizational routines" (p. 146) and "ideologies, values, beliefs, language, norms, ceremonies, and other social practices that ultimately shape and guide organizational action" (p. 147). This expands dimensions of responsibility for leaders and managers. For example, in the mechanical realm, leaders and managers focus their energies on designing efficient and effective *structures*. In the organic realm, they engage in designing and adapting *processes* to meet environmental and human needs. Organizations interested in brains perspectives may be drawn to a learning organization movement in which leaders and managers endeavor to provide opportunities for people to participate in self-development and self-organization. Within the cultural realm, leaders and managers examine their own role in reading and contributing to a created organizational ethos. As Morgan pointed out, managers can no longer "use their formal authority, function, and role as a kind of protective device that insulated them from many of the realities of organizational life" (p. 148). Considering their role from a cultural view, leaders and managers are what they are *"seen and experienced as being"* (p. 148), not what an organizational chart or job description says they are.

This metaphor emphasizes and brings to light the realization that viewpoints, actions, decisions, relationships, and so forth indeed do contribute to the creation of

realities. The interpretation of what the organization exists to do is always channeled through beliefs upon which visions, missions, targets, and aims are formulated. In a colloquial sense, people, collectively, really do think things into being.

A sensitivity to the notion that thoughts do become realities, in anticipated and unanticipated ways, provides many other realizations. This "knowing" may bring freedom to act and think in ways not considered possible before when the sense of self-importance and contribution to an organization or society seems limited or beyond reach. It might introduce ethics of behavior, based on the understanding that actions always have some impact somewhere. It may strengthen the recognition that critical evaluation and reflection are necessary before acting. And it may also raise an awareness that the actions that people take are part of a collective stream of actions. Morgan (1997a) addressed these ideas in the following way:

> The beliefs and ideas that organizations hold about who they are, what they are trying to do, and what their environment is like have a much greater tendency to realize themselves than is usually believed.
>
> This has considerable relevance for the way organizations should approach strategy formulation. By appreciating that strategy making is a process of enactment that *produces* a large element of the future with which the organization will have to deal, it is possible to overcome the false impression that organizations are adapting or reacting to a world that is independent of their own making. This can help empower organizations to take responsibility for the future in an active way and help them appreciate that they themselves often create the constraints, barriers, and situations that cause them problems. (p. 149)

Strategies, then, come together in a society as a forever evolving synergy of people thinking and doing, and of "events, situations, actions, and general circumstance" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 151). From one vantage point, then, all that is collectively created will collectively live.

A limitation of introducing the metaphor is that some people might consider culture as something that can be planned and rearranged. Culture in its largest and

"complete" sense is not something that can be controlled or created by any one or any group of people. Rather, the genuine depths and changing contours of culture are created as people interact with one another in a variety of circumstances.

The Political Metaphor

Human dynamics are always a force in shaping organization. In mechanistic organizations, human behavior is controlled and programmed to the extent possible. In organic organizations, human development needs are considered from survival to self-actualization. In a brains organization, tapping human potential through structures that aid thinking and communicating is brought to the fore. Organization from a cultural point of view addresses people as social beings developing shared meaning and creating realities. Organization as political systems focuses on human assertiveness in the realms of "interests, conflict and power" (Morgan, 1986, p. 148). In politics, people put themselves at the center; that is where people assert their sense of self. In the following, three dimensions of the political view of organization are reviewed: interests, conflict, and power.

Interests

> In talking about *interests* we are talking about a complex set of predispositions embracing goals, values, desires, expectations, and other orientations and inclinations that lead a person to act in one direction rather than another. (Morgan, 1986, p. 149)

Morgan (1986, 1997a) suggested that interests exist in at least three domains: task, career, and extramural. Tasks make up work, and certain interests arise in the course of performing tasks in a satisfactory or better manner. For example, people meet deadlines, come up with innovations, enhance their knowledge, expand their skill base, and improve their attitudes. Career interests revolve around aspirations and the "bigger picture" of where and who people want to be as they work in their chosen field. Many

want to make a difference and contribute to furthering and improving practices in their professional field and perhaps to having their moment of glory. Extramural interests cover all those things that relate to people as unique beings, such as personalities, hobbies, values and beliefs, families, studies, and so on.

Conflict

"Conflict arises whenever interests collide" (Morgan, 1986, p. 155). There are any number of combinations of experiences that can lead to conflict within oneself or among a few or many people, such as ideas, allocation of resources, value and purpose of work, organizational structures, and so forth. Most people who have worked in organizational settings are able to recall some examples. Different people handle conflict management in different ways. Morgan cited the following optional styles: avoidance, compromise, competition or rivalry, accommodation by giving way, and collaboration by solving the problem together (p. 192).

Power Structures and Sources

"Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Power influences who gets what, when, and how" (Morgan, 1986, p. 158). The most well-known power structures are associated with types of government. Morgan listed them as *autocracy, bureaucracy, technocracy, codetermination, representative democracy*, and *direct democracy* (p. 143). Autocracy is rule by one or a small group; bureaucracy is rule by policies, procedures, regulations, legislation, etc.; technocracy is rule by those who have the relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes; codetermination is rule by joint management of opposing parties; representative democracy is rule by election of representatives; and direct democracy is "where everyone has an equal right to and is involved in all decision making" (p. 145).

In addition, Morgan (1986, p. 159) listed and discussed 14 sources of power in an organization:

1. Formal authority
2. Control of scarce resources
3. Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations
4. Control of decision processes
5. Control of knowledge and information
6. Control of boundaries (for example, interface between departments)
7. Ability to cope with uncertainty
8. Control of technology
9. Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of "informal organization"
10. Control of counterorganizations (for example, trade unions)
11. Symbolism and the management of meaning (for example, enacting realities)
12. Gender and the management of gender relations
13. Structural factors that define the stage of action (for example, how underlying structures and logics of change affect power relations)
14. The power one already has.

People can choose different ways of working with power: *unitary, pluralist*, and *radical*. The unitary approach focuses on achieving established goals and objectives. The pluralist approach recognizes the diverse interests of individuals and groups within the organization and the potential for conflict. Last, the radical approach emphasizes "the oppositional nature of contradictory 'class' interests" (Morgan, 1986, pp. 188-189). Those who use this approach feel that marginalized groups can be helped by making "radical changes in the structure of society that displace those currently in power" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 200).

All organizations have political dimensions. An understanding of these dimensions helps to identify some significant impacts that human activity has on organizational ethos, structure, and direction. The activities discussed in this

metaphorical view are relatively observable and detectable manifestations of how we, as human beings, process and react to experiences that involve our interests and power.

Strengths and Limitations

One of the strengths of introducing the political metaphor is that it helps people recognize that many activities are driven by personal interests and not organizational interests. It reaffirms that politics is a real and inevitable dimension of organizational life and can be viewed as a constructive activity in seeking social order. Viewing organization through a political lens also "emphasizes the key role of power in determining political outcomes. The metaphors considered . . . earlier . . . tend to underplay the relation between power and organization" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 209). Interestingly, although it may be difficult for people to recognize their contribution to creating a reality in a cultural sense, it is not difficult for people to recognize their ability to create situations that will be conducive to realizing their own goals. Perhaps the difference is in the scope of the undertaking. Culture is a collective repository and is so complex that it is virtually impossible to trace all the impacts of one's actions. Personal interests are, on the other hand, individual domains. Rather than contributing to an overall organizational cause, people can use and influence aspects of organization to make them serve what they desire. Along this line of thought, then, the political metaphor explodes "the myth of organizational rationality. Organizations may pursue goals and stress the importance of rational, efficient, and effective management. But rational, efficient, and effective for whom? Whose goals are being pursued? What interests are being served? Who benefits?" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 209). Therefore, activities portrayed as rational for the organization are always closely related to how well those activities serve particular personal interest areas. Morgan (1997a) said: "Rationality is always political. No one is neutral in the management of organizations—even managers!" (p. 209). And it is not possible to separate the

organization from the people who are the organization. People will always pursue their personal interests, some from a more altruistic base than others. Arguments based on rationality, then, are used to justify "actions that suit . . . personal aspirations in terms that appear rational from an organizational standpoint" (p. 209).

Another strength of the metaphor is that it explains that organizations are not "functionally integrated systems" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 210). Because organizations are organizations of people with diverse interests, a very part of their being is created by tension, conflict, and compromise. From a leadership and management point of view it is "better to think about the organization as a coalition of changing interests and manage it that way than to pretend that it has more integrated properties" (p. 210).

One of the limitations of the metaphor identified by Morgan (1997a) is that it is always possible to read situations through the political lens. Too much emphasis on such readings may create some mistrust or cynicism that really has no basis. Another question that the political metaphor raises is whether the notion of pluralist leadership and management gets to the depths of organizational conflict. Pluralist management tends to focus on resolving differences in interests. It does not seem to address deeper issues related to "class, racial, and other social divisions" (pp. 212-213). Although pluralist management may deal with matters at a more surface level, just thinking about pluralism helps people explore the "sociopolitical implications of different kinds of organization and the roles that organizations play in society" (p. 211). To a pluralist manager, the playing field is organizational; to the radical organization theorists, the playing field includes many societal inequalities. Furthermore, Morgan asserted:

> A strong case can also be made for the idea that although everyone has access to sources of power, ultimate power rests with the people or forces that are able to define the stage of action on which the game of politics is played. From a radical standpoint, pluralist power may be more apparent than real. Ultimately, some people have much more power than others. (p. 213)

The Psychic Prison Metaphor

Morgan (1986) stated:

> The idea of a psychic prison was first explored in Plato's *Republic* in the famous allegory of the cave where Socrates addresses the relations among appearance, reality, and knowledge. The allegory pictures an underground cave with its mouth open toward the light of a blazing fire. Within the cave are people chained so that they cannot move. They can see only the cave wall directly in front of them. This is illuminated by the light of the fire, which throws shadows of people and objects onto the wall. The cave dwellers equate the shadows with reality, naming them, talking about them, and even linking sounds from outside the cave with the movements on the wall. Truth and reality for the prisoners rest in this shadowy world, because they have no knowledge of any other. (pp. 199-200)

In this metaphorical view of organization, the "shadows" of the mind and how they impact on organizational "reality" are considered. For this, Morgan (1986, 1997a) turned his attention to psychological theories and observations that delve into how experiences lodge in the unconscious and become "roadmarkers" that guide created, hence lived, journeys. In the following, a few words are devoted to how people "can become trapped by favored ways of thinking" (Morgan, 1986, p. 200). Following that, some psychoanalytic theories and findings are presented to illustrate how "organizations can become trapped by unconscious processes that lend organization a hidden significance" (p. 200). And last, archetypes that form through the collective unconscious are presented.

Favored Ways of Thinking

Today people are often told that they live in a chaotic and turbulent time. They are challenged to move out of their comfort zones, to reframe their thinking, and to avoid going the way of the dinosaurs. In seminars, in administrative journals, and in other literature, many examples have been provided of organizations that have failed to survive because they did not change their old ways. They were trapped in a favored way of thinking because that thinking heralded success in the past. An example of this is the

American automobile industry, which continued to manufacture and design big cars and focus on different kinds of ways to fuel engines, whereas the Japanese people spent time designing smaller and more economical cars that captured the market.

Groups also become trapped in what is commonly known as *groupthink*, in which people fail to question their assumptions and practices adequately to highlight potential flaws in their thinking or identify possible alternate routes of action. Members of the group acquiesce to a sense of "assumed consensus" that inhibits them from expressing doubts or suggesting innovations. The call today is for attributes that will jog the solace of favored ways of thinking. These attributes, often found in learning-organization literature, are critical thinking, reflection, understanding of team strengths and weaknesses, and openness in a trusting environment.

Our Unconscious

Looking at the unconscious requires that theories of how previous life experiences affect the present be explored. In this regard, Morgan (1986, 1997a) gave consideration to the possibilities that experiences blend with reactions to create indelible imprints on the unconscious in the areas of sexuality, paternalism, immortality, anxiety, and childhood toys.

Sexuality. Freud theorized on how people transform repressed sexuality into other forms of behavior. He suggested that people establish defenses as a result of repressing impulses and that these ultimately arise from the unconscious reservoir in the form of "disguised" behaviors. Examples of some of these defenses include:

Denial:	refusal to acknowledge an impulse-evoking fact, feeling, or memory.
Fixation:	rigid commitment to a particular attitude or behavior.
Rationalization:	creation of elaborate schemes of justification that disguise underlying motives and intentions. (Morgan, 1986, p. 206)

From another vantage point, Michel Foucault (as cited in Morgan, 1986) "encourages us to note the parallels between the rise of formal organization and the routinization and regimentation of the human body" (p. 208). If persons can confine and control the body, they can confine and control other social and political aspects of life. In this context, Morgan provided an interesting linkage with bureaucratic organization:

> As we examine the bureaucratic form of organization, therefore, we should be alert to the hidden meaning of the close regulation and supervision of human activity, the relentless planning and scheduling of work, and the emphasis on productivity, rule following, discipline, duty, and obedience. The bureaucracy is a mechanistic form of organization, but an anal one too. And not surprisingly, we find that some people are able to work in this kind of organization more effectively than others. If bureaucracies are anal phenomena encouraging an anal style of life, then such organizations will probably operate most smoothly when employees fit the anal character type and can derive various hidden satisfactions from working in this context. (p. 209)

The notion that sexuality, as it exists in the unconscious, is played out in shaping organization provides yet another way of understanding organization.

The patriarchal family. The idea that "we are a family" is often espoused in organizations. However, in the past, a typical family structure was patriarchal and hierarchical as well. If thoughts are limited to this definition of family, it is easy to see the parallels between the patriarchal family and the bureaucratic style of organization.

Immortality. When the political view of organization was considered, one aspect reviewed related to career interests. At that time, it was noted that some people really want to make a difference or make a contribution to their area of work. This aspect could also be considered as stemming from a desire for immortality, for people know their physical presence is finite, but perhaps they can do something so that their "presence" lives on in the form of an idea or direction or charitable contribution to society.

Anxiety. In the review of sexuality, various types of defenses were reviewed that form during childhood and that are held in the unconscious until they are played out

later in life. Anxiety is similar in that the notion of *splitting* good and bad experiences brings a realization that defenses can be set up to deal with repressive experiences that are not necessarily related to sexuality. Here, the defenses include such behaviors as *regression, dependency*, and *fight-flight.* Regression, as defined earlier, relates to persons going back to "childhood patterns of behavior to protect themselves from uncomfortable aspects of the real world" (Morgan, 1986, p. 216). Dependency emerges when there is a feeling of helplessness and therefore a need for leadership to handle the situation. And fight-flight, which is a common response to stress, turns energies into fighting against what is threatening or choosing to run away from the problem. Fight-flight does not usually help to solve problems, but rather redirects anxiety away from the problem for a period of time.

Childhood toys. Morgan (1986, p. 220) suggested that, according to psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, the favorite toys that we have in childhood serve as the initial objects with which we relate and therefore develop a sense of identity. These toys serve the purpose of being "transitional phenomena" which bridge our internal world with what is perceived as the external world. As people grow older, they continue to adopt other objects or ideas that help them frame their sense of identity and relations with the world. As many people have experienced and will attest to, if their identity is seriously challenged, "the fear of loss which this entails thus often generates a reaction that may be out of all proportion to the importance of the issue when viewed from a more detached point of view" (p. 221).

As Morgan (1986, 1997a) noted, these unconscious phenomena help to explain why change is so difficult for some people in certain situations.

Archetypes From the Collective Unconscious

The last area to review relates to Jung's (as cited in Morgan, 1986) theory "that the human psyche is part of a 'collective unconscious' that transcends the limits of space and time" (p. 223). Jung presented a theory that suggested that all people inherit or in some way possess archetypes, "structures of thought and experience" (p. 224) that serve to guide them in understanding and relating to the world. The notion that people have a repressed self within their more conscious self is part of this theory. Whatever is unresolved for people or banished from their conscious daily activities struggles to surface and challenge the lived rationality.

The idea of organizations as psychic prisons helps to address some very real, yet hard to touch, organizational phenomena. These views help to explain what may underlie some human activities and some ideologies of organization.

Strengths and Limitations

A strength of the psychic prison metaphor is it provides the opportunity for people to understand other people from a different vantage point. Morgan (1997a) noted that in terms of organization studies, the psychic prison metaphor contributes to understanding why change is difficult to introduce and achieve in organizations. He notes that the role a person fulfills within an organization becomes a very part of that person's identity. Hence, when organizational change is suggested, then people perceive that their very being and identity must also change. This often results in people feeling threatened and insecure.

In terms of another strength, Morgan (1997a) noted that

> the psychic prison metaphor shows us that we have over-rationalized our understanding of organization. Both in our behavior in organizations and in our explanations of organizations, factors such as aggression, greed, fear, hate, and libidinal drives have no official status. When they do break into the open, they are usually quickly banished through apologies, rationalizations, and punishments designed to restore a more neutered state of affairs. . . . Yet

> apologize, rationalize, punish, and control as we may, we do not rid organization of these repressed forces lurking in the shadow of rationality. This human underside will always exist, and . . . has to be taken into account if organization is to develop in a holistic and convivial way. (p. 246)

As noted in the political metaphor, the myth of rationality may need to be challenged. In the political metaphor, questions concerning rationality were centered around rationality for whom and for what. What makes something rational? Here, the question is one of, What is irrational? Irrational for whom, and for what? Morgan (1997a) noted that irrationality is the other side of rationality. In his words, the metaphor "encourages us to recognize that rationality is often irrationality in disguise" (p. 247). He followed through on this thought by suggesting that traditional leadership or management techniques focus on trying to achieve a certainty and control over organizational work and life. This metaphor, however, reminds people that such rationality cannot be the only focus. Among many considerations, another focus is to seek out the linkages between what is rational and what is irrational and why people perceive some activities or ideas as one or the other. As was noted under the political metaphor, if something blends with a set of interests, it appears to be rational; if not, it appears to be irrational. This metaphor goes deeper to explore why people have certain interests or perspectives.

Morgan (1997a) identified another strength of this metaphor as its focus on the human dimension of organization and, consequently, on ethical issues. Such issues can arise when organizations are overly consumed with instrumental ends, and not with human needs. Too much on either side—materialism or humanism—creates difficulties. But the point here is that because organizations are "tools" to achieve particular ends, an overzealousness to achieve may place the well-being of people second, if at all, on the list of priorities.

Another strength of the metaphor is that it serves as a reminder that the human psyche is affected by its experiences, and no one can control what form those influences will eventually take. As leaders and managers, then, the same sensitivity called for

under the cultural metaphor is repeated. Actions taken by those who have the power to take action create a type of reality for all persons affected by the action. These realities may manifest as types of "psychic prisons." In all of this, however, there needs to be a balance. On the one side, sensitivity to the fact that all actions will transform into a reality may help leaders and managers in their critical evaluation of what it is that they put in place. On the other side, if managers and leaders believe that their actions will create a reality, they may experience a paralysis in decision making because there is no certainty with regard to how the action will turn into meaning. I think that when viewing organization through either the cultural, political, or psychic-prison lens, one area that surfaces is the need to address ethics and values. Morgan (1997a) put it this way:

> The psychic prison metaphor plays a powerful role in drawing attention to the ethical dimension of organization. . . . There is nothing neutral about the way we organize. It is always human in the fullest sense and, as has been suggested, an increased awareness of the human dimension needs to be built into everything we do. (p. 248)

A consideration, then, is when the polarities of rationality and irrationality become evident, one must search out just what is struggling for attention. Therefore, rather than trying to stifle that which seems irrational, attempts could be made to understand and work with it. As Morgan (1997a) noted, irrationalities "offer a hidden reservoir of energy and ideas for mobilizing constructive change" (p. 248).

In terms of limitations, Morgan (1997a) cautioned that although the psychic prison metaphor draws attention to the unconscious psyche of people, all of this occurs within the wider ideological frame endorsed by the "powers that be" and woven into the fabric of the organization over time. Indeed, Morgan felt that the psychic prison metaphor needed to be expanded to explore "all the ideological processes through which we create and sustain meaning, not just the unconscious" (p. 248). The organization itself could be viewed as a psychic prison.

Morgan (1997a) also cautioned that leaders and managers may learn to appreciate and recognize psychic prisons, but that this alone is no guarantee that changes to organization can be effected. Although this appreciation may help

> improve the conduct of day-to-day affairs, particularly in showing how we can challenge taken-for-granted mind-sets or achieve a better understanding of the psychodynamics of change, many of its implications ignore the realities of power and the force of vested interests in sustaining the status quo. (p. 249)

Leaders and managers may recognize parts of an unconscious stream on a level that relates to workers' personal views and could also endeavor to recognize that unconscious stream on the level of the dominant ideology of the organization.

Morgan (1997a) added that the metaphor "can help us penetrate many of the complexities of organizational life. But it does not provide the easy answers and solutions to problems that many managers may wish to find" (p. 249).

The Flux and Transformation Metaphor

In this metaphorical view of organization, Morgan (1986, 1997a) focussed on the notion of how the universe is always in a state of both permanence and change. Drawing on "some abstract scientific thinking" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 252), he introduced four processes that relate to logics of change: *autopoiesis*, *chaos and complexity theory*, *mutual causality*, and *dialectical analysis*. Key to all the processes is that living systems are viewed from the inside rather than as an external observer. An overview follows.

Autopoiesis

Maturana and Varela (as cited in Morgan, 1986), two Chilean scientists, introduced the term *autopoiesis* to refer to the capacity of biological systems to self-create, self-renew, or self-produce. In order to follow the thrust of this thinking in a social setting, consideration needs to be given to (a) what comprises systems, (b) the premise that living systems interact with phenomena only insofar as they are connected

with self-production, and (c) how people perceive their role in creating their environment.

When systems theory was considered under the organic metaphor, the mechanistic thought about how organizations exist as self-sufficient, closed systems was deserted. In its place, the organic stance was adopted that organizations were impacted by, had to develop relations with, and had to respond to their internal and external environments. At that point, organizations were still perceived as entities affected by their environments. Within the autopoietic view, any thinking that relates to isolated parts needs to be abandoned. Thinking in an autopoietic sense, all notions that anything is external to the system need to be eradicated; thinking that systems are self-referenced, hence self-sufficient, closed systems needs to be resurrected; and thinking about systems needs to be sensed in a holistic way; that is, systems need to be perceived as complex composites of interaction that, when taken together, make up a whole. As Morgan (1986) said, "There is no beginning and end to the system because it is a closed loop of interaction" (p. 237). Therefore, the challenge is to remove any artificial boundaries that have been placed around organization as one entity and around environments as other entities. In this thinking, environments exist, but they exist as relations that are determined by the living system itself.

Organizations are still thought of as living systems, and according to Morgan's (1986) interpretation of Maturana and Varela, "Living systems are characterized by three principal features: autonomy, circularity, and self reference" (p. 236). The system is autonomous because it is complete in and of itself; it is all inclusive. It has circularity because the interactions, or "kicks," occurring randomly throughout the systems always impact somewhere, providing another impact and another, but all the while sustaining and creating the system as a system. The system comes to be, or is what it is, because it is self-referential; that is, it is always acting in ways that will renew or reproduce itself. As Morgan noted, within the system "we find self-referring systems within self-

referring systems" (p. 237). Morgan provided the following example to illustrate this principle:

> The bee as an organism comprises a chain of self-referring biological systems with their own circular organization, and lives within a society of bees where relations are also circular. In turn, the relationship between the society of bees and the wider ecology is also circular. Eliminate the bees and the whole ecology will change, for the bee system is linked with the botanical system, which is linked with the insect, animal, agricultural, human, and social systems. All these systems are self-referential and turn back on each other. A change in any one system, e.g., a decision to use an insecticide which eliminates bees as a side effect, can transform all the others. (p. 237)

This may begin to help people sense the far-reaching connectivity that is evident within systems. But how does this connectivity play out in the system, and how should an understanding develop with regard to the basis for and the influence of actions taken?

One condition to consider is what Morgan (1986) called *egocentric organizations*. These organizations have a fixed idea of who and what they are and as a result limit their view of the system within which they interact. When they take action on a limited scope, based on their limited identity, and when they do not recognize the potential extent of their system, they sometimes find that they are out of sync; they give up the alternatives that could have been pursued; and, although they may not realize it, they are responsible for the destruction of their context and place within the system. Hence a notion related to egocentric organizations is that rather than continuing with an organization-versus-environment mindset, people in organizations need to view their organizational situation as one where they are actually involved with creating and evolving within the system. Thoughts of organizations as "isolated" entities within a system need to be replaced by an understanding of organizations "being" in and a part of an "infinite" system. Egocentric conceptions of organization reduce chances for exploring and understanding systemic interdependence and obliterate an appreciation that organizations of people "are always more than themselves" (p. 246). This seems to suggest that for any action that anyone or any organization or any system sets in motion,

there will be implications, changes, effects, movement, and such within the system. Organizations evolve along with their environments.

Chaos and Complexity

As Morgan (1997a) pointed out, "It seems systemically wiser to view organization and environment as elements of the same interconnected *pattern. In evolution, it is pattern that evolves"* (p. 261). Chaos and complexity theories emerged in recent years to suggest how patterns evolve.

Researchers who work on chaos and complexity theory have found that "coherent order *always* emerges out of the randomness and surface chaos" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 262). In essence, these theorists have suggested that order is a natural outcome that will emerge at points amidst the complexity and chaos. They have also suggested that systems are drawn to particular *attractors* that either maintain the system's status or sway system attention and activities in certain other directions. These attractors are part of the chaos and complexity and are part of the overall environment. It occurs to me that this notion describes every moment of every day. Whatever action a person takes has some type of effect. We will likely not know the totality of our "effects" ever. But as living beings, all persons are part of what makes the "system" the "system."

Given the exponential complexity and scope of living systems, thinking in terms of direct cause and effect must also be expanded.

Mutual Causality

Magorah Maruyama's (as cited in Morgan, 1986) work focussed on how systems are shaped as the result of positive and negative feedback. As discussed under cybernetics in the organic metaphorical view, negative feedback serves to sustain a phenomenon within the scope of particular and established norms. On the other hand, positive feedback works more in a replicative, somewhat exponential sense, "where more leads to more, and less to less" (p. 247). Within any system, random and planned

acts produce any number of outcomes. It is not possible, therefore, to draw direct and singular lines between actions and outcomes, but rather it is necessary to draw several connecting loops among actions within the system. With regard to positive-feedback loops then, what ends up happening is that the greater the occurrences of connectivity, the greater those movements contribute to change in the system; and conversely, fewer connections result in less influence. In terms of negative feedback, actions are taken to sustain a particular phenomenon at a particular state. These feedback loops, or "kicks" in the system, serve to create the system; people may or may not really know what "kick" set off reactions that result in larger or smaller system characteristics:

> For example, a small crack in a rock may collect water, which freezes and makes the crack larger, permitting more water to collect and the crack to get bigger and bigger, allowing small organisms and earth to collect, a seed to grow, and the rock to be transformed by the growth of vegetation and perhaps even a tree. The runaway process creates differentiation, which may then be sustained in a given form by processes of negative feedback. (p. 248)

However, by expanding thinking to include all possibilities, participants, and events within a system, to the best of one's comprehension, then it is more likely that an organization will evolve with the system rather than in perceived isolation outside the system. This suggests that people can plan and undertake interventions that will "achieve the kind of *system* transformation that one desires" (Morgan, 1986, p. 250); maybe, maybe not. To help in charting the dynamics of a system, Morgan suggested that

> the best approach is often to (a) attempt to identify the principal subsystems or nests of loops that hang together, (b) modify their relations when necessary by reducing or increasing the strengths of existing linkages and adding or removing loops, and (c) give particular attention to the loops joining different subsystems. (p. 254)

Charting of this nature looks very much like mind maps where any number of notions are identified and linked among one another.

In this area, people are encouraged to understand that simplified, linear, cause-and-effect thinking will result in simple, linear definitions of problem resolution. Positive and negative feedback loops exist within all systems.

> Processes of negative feedback, where a change in a variable initiates counteracting forces leading to changes in the opposite direction, are important in accounting for the stability for the stability of systems. Processes characterized by positive feedback, where more leads to more and less to less, are important in accounting for escalating patterns of system change. Together, these feedback mechanisms can explain why systems gain or preserve a given form and how this form can be elaborated and transformed over time. (Morgan, 1997a, p. 274)

Mutual causality "mind mapping" demonstrates that there is no one cause for any particular effect, but rather many interfacing positive and negative feedback loops serve as "kicks" which change the pattern of the system.

The next topic is dialectical analysis. The concept of vast interconnectivity and impact remain, but, rather than looking at ways things resonate, one looks at the manner in which opposites and contradictions create change within systems.

Dialectical Analysis

Morgan (1997a) focussed on aspects of Taoist philosophy and Marxist principles to introduce some dynamics that underlie change. Ancient Chinese Taoism recognizes that living systems are always in a state of flux and transformation. Their characters of *yin* and *yang* symbolize opposites in "a continuous cyclic movement: The *yang* returns cyclically to its beginning, the *yin* attains its maximum and gives place to the *yang*" (Morgan, 1986, p. 256). And so it goes; one phenomenon changes into its opposite. Night turns into day, hot into cold, and life into death. Taoist philosophy influenced some Western thinking, including that of Karl Marx.

Marx (as cited in Morgan, 1986) developed a method of analysis that showed how contradictions forge change. As a social theorist, he identified "primary tensions or contradictions shaping a given society" (p. 257) and then "trace their repercussions on

the detailed pattern of social life" (p. 257). An example relates to the relations and effects that emerge as the result of capitalism and particularly the need to ensure that the costs of producing a commodity (called *exchange value*) do not exceed what consumers will pay for the commodity (called *use value*). Because owners want to realize a profit, they must keep the cost of production down and be competitive in the marketplace. Therefore owners often try to save money in any way they can, such as paying their workers as little as possible or introducing technology to save on labor. As a result, management-worker conflict arises. Workers lobby for more pay or against being replaced by machines or other processes. Furthermore, social classes are created in a form particular to capitalism, and the impacts continue. Morgan summarized the extent to which society is shaped as the result of the need to make a profit:

> The conflicts featured in Marxist theory—between capitalists and workers, management and unions, ruling class and working class, bourgeoisie and proletariat, producers and nonproducers, the economic base or "substructure" of a society and its political-ideological "superstructure"—all stem from the contradiction between use and exchange values inherent in surplus value and the nature of the simple commodity. For Marx, social life in capitalist society unfolds as a result of these basic contradictions. (p. 260)

Marx presented these ideas one hundred years ago, and today people live out his predictions. If dialectical analysis can be performed satisfactorily, it may be possible to understand and possibly forecast, or avoid, the contradictions and impacts of our actions.

Dialectical analysis requires systems thinking, in that it is necessary to be able to identify the level at which contradictions manifest. Contradictions can be primary and secondary. The secondary contradictions are offshoots of the primary. Managers often end up dealing with paradox, secondary contradictions at a more micro level of operation that has been caused by a primary contradiction at another, probably wider area of operation. Managers need to work at recognizing the contradictions, then work

at managing both sides of the contradiction while obfuscating negative dimensions that could compromise desired accomplishments.

Another insight that dialectical analysis provides is that an innovative breakthrough can destroy established practice, and once the breakthrough is established practice, it too will be destroyed by yet another breakthrough.

In summary, the first perspective that the flux and transformation metaphor introduced was that living systems are an integral part of the environment. This notion was discussed under the subsection referring to *autopoiesis*, which encourages an awareness and a dissolving of boundaries in order that people can gain a sense of the infinite blending of living systems.

The second perspective discussed included notions related to chaos and complexity theory, such as that order emerges out of chaos, changes are driven to a certain extent by attractors that influence the definition and direction of change, and that small, seemingly insignificant events can lead to system shifts that again influence the definition and direction of change.

The third perspective this metaphorical view included was *mutual causality*, which relates to sensing that living systems are a large, if not infinite, and more interdependent series of linkages than it is possible to perceive when engaged in simpler cause-and-effect thinking. Mutual causality demonstrates how fields of relations are likely shaped through positive and negative feedback loops.

And finally, the metaphor provided an introduction to *dialectical analysis*, shows how change results from the dynamics of opposites and contradictions within the system. It draws attention to the "paradoxes and tensions that are created whenever elements of a system try to push in a particular direction" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 299).

The concepts of autopoiesis, chaos and complexity, mutual causality, and dialectical analysis challenge people to think wider, deeper, and with more awareness of complexity. Therefore, more than in any of the other metaphorical views considered

thus far, that people view the world in certain ways and take action on their perceptions is emphasized in the notions related to flux and transformation.

Strengths and Limitations

> Around 500 B.C. the Greek philosopher Heraclitus noted that "you cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing on." He was one of the first Western philosophers to address the idea that the universe is in a constant state of flux, embodying characteristics of both permanence and change. (Morgan, 1997a, p. 251)

Morgan (1997a) suggested that a major strength of the flux and transformation metaphor was that it sought "to fathom the nature and source of change, so that we can understand its logic" (p. 298). Certainly the metaphor, as presented, offers a way of understanding how the role of organizations and the people within them play a part in patterns of change. In this way, the metaphor encourages reflection on the greater integration of self, organization, and environment; and it insists that a broader perspective of one's world be recognized. At the same time, the metaphor promotes a particular understanding of change that is conceptual and is based on scientific, biological notions.

The discussion on theories of chaos and complexity, mutual causality, and dialectical opposition provide ways of understanding change as an "emergent phenomenon that cannot be predetermined or controlled" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 299). Hence, the metaphor is a reminder that change, insofar as organization is concerned, is not a disconnected, autonomous activity, generated by some nonhuman energy, but rather is a manifestation of realities that people have created. As Morgan noted, "Organizations, like individuals, have to appreciate that they are always more than themselves" (p. 298). He also noted that although the organic metaphor introduced the concept that organizations are open systems, paradoxically this concept seems to have perpetuated an "illusion of separateness" (p. 298). That is, organizations are "open" to

other systems, all of which seem to be contained and able to relate to others in certain ways.

The flux and transformation metaphor urges understanding organizations as "integrated systems." Morgan (1997a) said that "the fundamental challenge is to think in terms of gestalt patterns, not just in terms of immediate organization-environment relations" (p. 298). Although this may seem conceptual, the perspectives, or metaphorical frameworks, that Morgan presented help to elaborate the concept.

A challenge of the metaphor identified by Morgan (1997a) is that leaders and managers need to accept that they are a part of a larger movement which they cannot control, and yet they also need to contribute to shaping that change whenever they can. Morgan put it this way:

> The challenge, of course, is to cope with this paradox: By recognizing that even though we cannot exert unilateral power or control over any complex system, we can act through the power and control that we actually do have. Using the image popularized by chaos theorists, the invitation is to recognize that although we may be no more than "butterflies" in terms of our power on the overall system we can have enormous effects, especially when we use our insights about systems dynamics and the nature of change to determine how and where to intervene. And, of course, the more butterflies the better! (p. 300)

The paradox is interesting, because on the one hand there is a full realization that people are unable to predict or control the impacts of their actions as they domino through and within other realities; but on the other hand, as thinking and doing beings, we will take actions and make decisions. All are connected, and each connection carries a perception and likely an action and creates a reality, and the cycle continues.

The Instruments of Domination Metaphor

In the domination metaphor, Morgan (1997a) set forth ways that organizations affect people, cultures, politics, and economies in forceful and indomitable ways. It, like all the metaphors, presents a partial view of seeing organization. Here, the focus is on

situations where organizations abandon balanced approaches in their affairs, most usually because they are suffused with ensuring economic success.

Mechanistically, many organizations are structured and operated as bureaucracies; hence they are controlling structures and tend to establish relationships where people, and possibly nations, become dependent on them. Organically, they negotiate and shape environments with their own interests foremost in their corporate "minds." In any number of organizations, central control alienates any need to tap the "brains" in the organization. Culturally, organizations as they are known in the Western world are replicate "societies" built on class-based systems and practices that may benefit some more than others, and as such they may exploit human resources. Often their activities at home or abroad may also exploit a country's natural resources. Politically, large organizations play influential roles as they work to effect favorable power and economic climes to further their own interests. Indeed, many multinational organizations are more powerful than national governments. In terms of psychic prisons, many organizations rationalize their decisions by finding elaborate ways to justify their self-serving positions. And possibly at the root of this "ugly" side of organization are notions associated with autopoiesis. Organizations are driven by their need to self-produce and secure their identity. As mutual causality mapping would show, their reach is far, wide, and influential.

Control and Rationalization

Organizations are tools and instruments created to achieve certain ends. When people become a part of the organization, they are placed in a position of becoming creators, agents, or hosts of the organization's culture, politics, and purpose. If the organization is bureaucratic, it follows that likely there will be many who work "in the interests of the few" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 303). In such scenarios, domination by those with authority seems to be accepted by workers. They perceive that shareholders,

executives, and managers in their pursuit of organizational livelihood and growth have a *right* to establish expectations and exercise control over activities in exchange for workers' services and wages. As a result, workers often "freeze" their own vitality, creativity, and potential in order to "mechanically" perform their tasks as demanded and outlined within the organization. Whatever type of domination people wield over others, the result is likely to be some form of "uneasy tension" (p. 304).

> Weber was also much concerned by the trend toward increasing bureaucratization and rationalization. For him, the process of bureaucratization presented a very great threat to the freedom of the human spirit and the values of liberal democracy, because those in control have a means of subordinating the interests and welfare of the masses. (Morgan, 1997a, pp. 304-305)

This dissertation refers to power but does not make a study of power. Power relations among people are complicated.

> As leaders rise to power, they tend to become preoccupied with their own way of looking at things, and it seems that the most that can be hoped for is that they will attempt to keep the interests of their members in mind. But in [French sociologist] Michel's view, even democratically elected leaders with the best intentions have a tendency to become part of an elite furthering their own interests and to hang onto their power at all costs. (Morgan, 1997a, p. 306)

It is not only the workers who numb their unique human qualities, but it is also the leaders. The acceptance of a dominant or subservient role is usually driven by the human exigencies to feel secure in meeting their basic needs, or to adopt an identity by belonging with a community of people.

Leaders are often unfairly singled out as the dominant forces, and the workers as the dominated. But it occurs to me that the essence of the domination is created and sustained collectively by the entire group, and it is the legitimizing magic of rationality that is probably worth examining. As Morgan (1997a) noted:

> As we become increasingly subject to administration through rules and engage in strict calculations relating means and ends and costs and benefits, we become increasingly dominated by the *process* [italics mine] itself. Impersonal principles and the quest for efficiency tend to become our new slave drivers. (p. 306)

Most of the negative critiques of organization arise from corporate activities that threaten or take advantage of affected general populations. Ethical questions could well be brought to the fore when organizations' drives for efficiency and production outweigh the need to safeguard workers' physical and mental health. For example, are workloads reasonable? Are safety measures in place to protect people and property from toxins that could create health or environmental hazards? Are commitments made to workers who provide loyal service only good for the time that the workers can provide the service at the lowest cost? Questions such as these will be raised whenever the scales tip too far in favor of organizational success earned at the expense of human well-being.

Political Involvement

Considering the activities of organizations from the domination metaphor point of view, it comes as no surprise that organizations place their own interests first and foremost. In order to create conditions that will serve their interests, involvement in politics is inevitable.

Large organizations and multinationals generally become involved in political agendas in order that they can exert their influence for their own economic reasons. If, for example, an organization's ongoing success is threatened by the introduction of some governmental line of development or by some restricting legislation, organizations will use their lobbying power to steer the course of those developments or pieces of legislation in ways that will not harm the organization. Special loans, special inducements, tax breaks, and so on are examples of how organizations involve themselves in political activities in the economic sense.

There are times, however, when organizations become even more deeply involved in politics. The following account provides the best explanation:

> The classic and infamous case is ITT's involvement in the affairs of Chile, where it plotted in 1970 to stop the election of Marxist President Salvador Allende. Conspiring with the CIA, ITT sought to create economic chaos with Chile and thus to encourage a military coup, with the company offering to contribute "up to seven figures" to the White House to stop Allende coming to power. (Morgan, 1997a, p. 331)

A main concern highlighted by the domination metaphor insofar as politics are concerned is that organizations are involved in nations' politics, but have no accountability to anyone but themselves.

Negotiating and Shaping Environments

In a very physical sense, large organizations affect environments by exploiting commodities and natural resources of other countries. For example, in terms of extracting raw materials,

> Until pressured by host governments to do so, multinational corporations used to conduct little refining or processing of raw products in the country of extraction. The materials were exported in a raw state, often at considerable profit but with little benefit to the host country either financially or in terms of economic development. (Morgan, 1997a, p. 336)

Multinationals have also restructured agriculture in some countries. They introduce cash crops "such as sugar, coffee, tropical fruits, nuts, and carnations" (p. 336) for export to the West and, in doing so, use the land for purposes other than yielding foodstuffs for the local population. "Locals" work for the multinationals to produce the cash crops at subsistence wages. Eventually, the people are dispossessed of their own land, are dependent on the multinational for wages, and are held, financially, at close to poverty levels.

Although organizations would prefer to be applauded for what they bring to a culture or nation in terms of "work" a truism appears to be that they strip other countries of their resources in order to make a profit for themselves:

> As Teresa Hayter has put it, they are involved in "the creation of world poverty." It is estimated that the richest 20 percent of world population now have an average per capita income 60 times greater than the poorest 20 percent. (Morgan, 1997a, pp. 336-337)

Few benefits appear to accrue to the host countries as a result of multinational presence. If technology is introduced as part of the work, the multinational retains control over it; if technology is "given" to a host country, it is often outdated and of no use to the corporation in its home country. There are other instances where technology has been imported to a country, but the country's practices, power systems, communication systems, and so on make the imported technology inappropriate. If technology is purchased and used, the host country ends up being dependent on the country providing the technology insofar as parts, repairs, updates, and customization are concerned. In this way, some critics argue, "Multinationals are doing no more than a form of intelligent marketing that ultimately serves their own interests" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 338).

Multinationals can also negotiate and shape economic environments. For example, by trading among their own subsidiaries, they are able to buy high from one and sell low to another. In this way, they can manipulate their profit figures in whatever direction they wish for tax purposes. Where taxes are high, they can keep their profits low; and vice versa: Where taxes are low, they can make their profits appear higher. Morgan (1997a) noted that "it has been estimated that a staggering one-third of world trade is intracompany trade. In terms of value, each multinational corporation is often its own most important customer" (p. 338). Multinationals can also switch their profits "from one industry to another to take advantage of special incentives offered by host governments" (p. 338).

Organizations also shape cultural environments. Morgan (1997a) referred to the "global marketing alliance struck between McDonald's and Disney" (p. 329) and

suggested that this coming together "will have a massive socializing impact on youths throughout the world" (p. 329).

Organizations are an inherent part of the environment, and as such their actions create contexts. The manner in which multinationals can manipulate and create environments to accommodate their own interests brings about an awareness of their influence in creating contexts that will allow them to self-produce.

Autopoietic or Mechanistic Activities?

The single-mindedness of striving for self-production and identity seems to place organizations in a position that could be compared to a bumble bee acting on its instincts. Taken in the extreme, this metaphor makes it seem as though the organization has no human capacity for free will, hence no conscience, no compassion, and no commitment to anything or anyone other than itself. Instinctual and self-serving activities come without responsibility, without ethics, and without accountability. But then again, perhaps to grace the organization with a living being's quality of possessing instincts is off the mark. The discussion here has been limited to bureaucratic, controlling organizations. Therefore, these dominating organization are machines, designed by humans to do a job. It is operating within its design, and it is designing us and our world.

Strengths and Limitations

Morgan (1997a) suggested that the domination metaphor brings to light activities that from other standpoints could be considered as

> the unintended consequence of an otherwise rational system of activity. The negative impact that organizations often have on their employees or their environment, or that multinationals have on patterns of inequality and world economic development, is not necessarily an intended one. It is usually a consequence of rational actions through which a group of individuals seeks to advance a particular set of aims, such as increased profitability or corporate growth. (p. 340)

The challenge of the domination metaphor is, "What, then, do we mean by rationality?" (p. 340). As Morgan said, rationality has a double-edged nature and "always reflects a partial point of view" (p. 340).

Another strength of this metaphor is that it calls for organizations to consider and question their values and ideologies. Much of what is discussed in the domination metaphor relates to the social effects and ills created by an organization's placing a priority on its economic success rather than on also accepting responsibility for the well-being of people, and the environment. Morgan (1997a) noted that this relates to the ongoing debate between materialists and humanists. However, he also noted that most organizational theory to date has remained neutral on ideologies and reserved ethical questions as a field of special study.

Another strength Morgan (1997a) identified was that this metaphor "shows a way of creating an organization theory *for* the exploited" (p. 341). It may fuel what is considered a radical frame and in this way challenge conventional theory. Morgan noted that viewing organizations as instruments of domination may be considered a radical frame of reference.

On the other hand, a limitation of the metaphor, as noted by Morgan (1997a), is that it could be linked

> to a crude conspiracy theory of organization and society. Although there is much evidence to suggest that patterns of domination are class based, that there is a tendency for the interests of ruling elites to converge in centralized ownership and control, and that government policies often work in ways that sustain and serve the interests of dominant social groups, this does not necessarily support the idea that there is a conspiracy in the way one group or social class is pitted against another. (p. 342)

Because the metaphor as presented raises negative consequences of some organizational pursuits, another limitation is that it could blind people to the reality that there are organizations that are not dominating. Stemming from this notion, Morgan (1997a) noted that the metaphor may be a foundation "to critique the values that underlie

different modes of organization, and highlight the differences between exploitive and nonexploitive forms, rather than engage in critique in a broader sense" (p. 344).

In the foregoing, a review of Morgan's (1986, 1997a) eight metaphorical views of organization has been provided. Theories associated with each view and the strengths and limitations of understanding organization through the various metaphorically contained views have been summarized. In the next section, some aspects of metaphor are introduced.

Conclusion

In this chapter an introduction to the use and function of metaphor was offered, and a detailed orientation to Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization* was provided in anticipation of working with his metaphorical model of organizational analysis. These topics are revisited in Chapter V and are discussed from perspectives and insights gained as a result of experimenting with using Morgan's model of organizational analysis.

In Chapter III I work with Morgan's (1986, 1997a) model as it specifically relates to viewing organization from eight metaphorical stances. Those stances are organizations as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination.

CHAPTER III

FRAMING ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS

This chapter undertakes an analytical reading of organization by relating study participants' comments to Morgan's (1986, 1997a) eight metaphorical images. The reading focuses on the four study scenarios related to college collaborative governance, curriculum, mission, and task force process.

In order to frame organizational contexts I undertook a number of activities. First, I conducted interviews with 12 study participants associated with the college. The interviews centered on prepared study scenarios which described college-wide directions or processes and which were accompanied by guiding questions to stimulate and focus reflection. Second, I listened to the audio tapes of the 12 interviews. Third, I transcribed the 12 interviews. Fourth, I read through each transcription eight separate times, focusing my thinking during each reading on one particular metaphorical frame and its associated theories. In this way, I "read" study participants' comments from the vantage points of each metaphorical view. As I read, I coded passages that I thought were representative of a particular metaphorical view. Fifth, I prepared eight separate documents that consolidated all quotations from study participants relating to each particular metaphor: one document for machines, one for organisms, one for brains, and so on. Sixth, for each of the eight metaphorical documents I identified major themes. Seventh, using these themes and participants' quotations, I wrote the organizational contexts for each study scenario presented in this chapter.

In his books *Images of Organization* (Morgan, 1986, 1997a) and *Imaginization: New Mindsets for Seeing, Organizing, and Managing* (Morgan, 1997b), Morgan provided case study descriptions that serve as organizational contexts, which he then diagnosed and evaluated as part of the formal process. The organizational contexts in

this chapter serve a similar purpose and are necessary as the foundation for the diagnoses and evaluations that follow in Chapter IV.

Organizational Reading for Scenario 1: Collaborative Governance

The scenario provided to study participants was,

> *Collaborative governance principles were adopted in 1991. An exploration of those principles demonstrates that a variety of formal administrative structures and cultures are in place to deal with the complex college milieu. Given this complexity, each distinct structure and culture tends to work well in the realization of certain principles, but not as well for some of the other principles.*

Participants reflected on college structure and culture and the collaborative governance milieu. In the following, I piece together a partial picture of the college created from a mix of respondents' comments and my subsequent thoughts regarding which metaphorical views may underlie the themes that emerged.

Compartmentalization; competition; time; holographic brains; conflict, interest and power; traps; contradictory tension; and irony are the features I identified in this analytical reading.

Compartments

One study participant echoed the comments of others: *"We are very much structured into what I call silos" (Administrator A).* The predominant mechanistic theme that surfaced in my reading of study participants' comments related to the collaborative governance scenario was physical and operational compartmentalization. I also observed that compartmentalization was a physical feature of the college, which comprises a series of buildings grouped together on a campus. To a significant extent, each building houses specialty academic, career, or community programs. Operationally, the organization chart depicts a typical hierarchical structure, boxing positions and responsibilities to show how work is divided among the people who make up the organization. Whether the focus is on physical or operational characteristics or

on descriptive statements made by study participants, from a mechanistic point of view, a college characteristic seems to be compartmentalization.

According to several participants' comments, this compartmentalized manner of organizing creates barriers. For example, insofar as collaborative governance is concerned, the partitioning appears to block principles relating to open communication and participatory decision-making practices. As another participant observed:

> *I sensed we had created silo behavior, a lack of horizontal communication, a tremendous emphasis on wanting to control things not just in the hierarchy component of the silo but throughout the silo, and silo to silo. I want to encourage far more in horizontal communication, breaking down traditional labeled silos and operational silos. (Executive Officer B)*

Collaborative governance principles support open communication. The traditional, and mechanistic, way of managing is by classical management, which, insofar as communication is concerned, emphasizes that channels of communication follow lines of authority. For comparison purposes, these principles are contrasted below in Figure 1.

Collaborative governance principle	Classical management principle
Focus on communications: Open sharing of information at all levels and effective channels of communication (upward, downward, and lateral) are essential to the process of collaborative governance. There must be ongoing emphasis of both written and verbal communication (college documents).	**Scalar chain:** The line of authority from superior to subordinate, which runs from top to bottom of the organization; this chain, which results from the unity of command principle, should be used as a channel for communication and decision making (Morgan, 1997a, p. 19).

Figure 1. Comparison of collaborative governance and classical management principles relative to communication.

The following comment suggests that the collaborative governance principle related to open communication is being attempted, yet shows that the classical management principle is still inherent in the system:

> *I think we changed a lot of practices where information is being shared much more broadly than it was before. A lot of meetings were held in the college, and there were no minutes kept. Now, I think there are minutes kept at almost every meeting, and they are circulated up and down. That was a change. So there is an attempt to have more information going up and down. (Administrator E)*

From a mechanistic view, the physical and operational walls created by siloed organizational design appear to complement vertical communication, but thwart collaborative lateral communication.

Although decision making is noted in the classical management scalar chain principle above, the following principles (Figure 2) also relate to decision-making practices.

Collaborative governance principle	Classical management principle
Opportunity for involvement: College employees will have the opportunity to become involved, either directly or by representation, in decisions which affect them and their work units (college documents).	**Staff and line:** Staff personnel can provide valuable advisory services, but must be careful not to violate line authority (Morgan, 1997a, p. 19).

Figure 2. Comparison of collaborative governance and classical management principles relative to decision making.

The following respondents indicated that collaboration, as it pertains to decision making, is typically viewed through a classical management lens:

> *Collaboration means getting input, discussing it with someone. You look at who is impacted by that decision and then meet with those people. Collaboration doesn't mean it's a vote by consensus or anything like that. It means that you've*

talked to them, you've discussed it, you've explained it, and they have an opportunity to give you feedback, which you have a responsibility to consider. You don't just say, "I'll collaborate, but I'm going this way anyway." You have a responsibility to consider that feedback, and then in your best consideration you make the decision, and you have the right to make the decision. (Administrator A)

I don't think collaborative governance means having everybody involved in every decision of the organization. I think it means providing opportunities for appropriate and open input to decisions. (Executive Officer B)

We can cooperate by discussing something, but that doesn't necessarily mean that we are jointly involved in making the decision. I can consult and say to somebody, "I have to make a decision around this. Here's what I'm thinking about. What do you think?" Then I go away and make the decision. Or if you are talking about collaboration as I understand it, it has to be more joint decision making. We would come to the table, we would have a discussion of the issues, and we would jointly agree upon the decision at the table. I think as a college we've probably had the most trouble with this because we still operated in the consultation mode more than we did in the collaborative mode. (Administrator C)

My reading is that collaborative governance principles in areas related to communication and decision making seem constrained by a tendency to return to classical management principles. As a result, collaborative governance, itself an organic-metaphor concept dealing with openness and development of relationships, seems to be frustrated by a mechanistic, compartmentalized physical structure that was operationally classically managed. The following respondents commented on this concern:

As I look back at collaborative governance, I think there was a good philosophy there, but I'm not sure that by maintaining the very conventional structure of organization at the college that that was the right structure to help us address and implement new ways of doing things. Organizations are decentralizing. We know that tall bureaucratic forms can no longer be, are no longer supple enough to respond to the changes that are taking place in the world markets. (Executive Officer A)

I think that the structure might not have, in fact, been supportive to allow collaborative governance, or collaboration among and between stakeholders. In this culture there is an expectation that there is a lot of collaboration. The structure gets people circling their wagons in their own area, and so we end up

with an inability to move and to reallocate resources the way they need to be in order to survive. (Executive Officer B)

In my reading of participants' comments, from a mechanistic view, the theme of compartmentalization emerged, and the notion that open communication and collaborative decision making were somewhat thwarted by this characteristic also seems evident.

In the next part of the reading, the organic metaphor area related to how people connect survival with perceptions of environment is broached.

Competition or Collaboration

Environmental relationships emerged as an organic theme. An organic view stresses that organizations are open to their environments. The manner in which people within the organization perceive and relate to their environment does much to influence the development of the organization itself, as this respondent indicated: *"I see each program in many ways as living in its own world. The way people in the program view the world will shape the way they see the college interacting with the environment" (Instructor A).*

Morgan (1986, 1997a) discussed a contingency theory approach to analyzing organization/environment relationships and suggested that a number of questions be asked to gain insight into these relationships. Among the questions posed, the following is relevant here: "Is the stance toward the environment competitive or collaborative?" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 57). As the following comments indicate, the dominant college stance appears to be competitive, although a collaborative stance is beginning to emerge. The mechanistic trait of working in compartments may influence environmental stance, because people within the college tend to see the environment as another compartment from which they may draw resources or to which they respond or adapt. These ideas are explored below.

Organic views of organization include population ecology and organizational ecology as optional dimensions of organization/environment relationships. A population ecology stance is premised on the notion that organizations need to compete for limited resources and adapt to their environment. It is based on the "survival of the fittest" concept. The notion that resources are limited in an environment shared with others who also wish to obtain those resources can place organizations in a competitive mode. A number of observations made by people at the college suggest that the environment is viewed through a population ecology lens:

> *I think reality is that competition is a way of life in some ways, and it's not going to go away, though I think what we want it to be is functional as opposed to dysfunctional. I even see competition as healthy. In fact, I think it motivates. (Administrator E)*

> *We have an "establish your own turf" history. Create a program and then make sure you defend it. It's really an entrepreneurial kind of model isn't it? It's deeply rooted in this culture. (Instructor C)*

> *I think the competition internally creates some problems insofar as collaborative governance is concerned. Competition is both the reason for our success and now the reason why we have to revisit it, because we built a lot of our success by fostering a certain degree of internal competition within the college. It has served the college very well in the past. We have grown very well. So this internal competition is, I think, one of the things you may want to bring up. (Administrator B)*

On the other hand, an organizational ecology point of view suggests that organizations are part of a complex ecosystem, not separate entities struggling to survive in an environment. As Morgan pointed out (1997a, p. 64), the isolated and independent actions of individual organizations attempting to adapt to their environments do not explain evolution; rather, understanding evolution involves understanding that the whole ecosystem evolves. Evolution, then, in the latter sense, is the result of "a pattern of relations embracing organisms *and* their environments" (p. 64), and it is this pattern that evolves, not just the separate organizations that form the overall pattern. So, rather than separating college from environment and holding to a

belief that the environment will select survivors or that the organization will evolve by adapting to the environment, the organizational ecology view encourages a view of the larger ecosystem that results from the overall pattern of multiple organizations and environments shifting, combining, reshaping, and so on, in a type of co-creation of the environment. In this view, then, people shape and negotiate their environment along with others in the ecosystem. No longer is it a question of the survival of the fittest, as in population ecology. Morgan noted:

> Under the influence of interpretations of evolution that emphasize the survival of the fittest, competition is often encouraged as the basic rule of organizational life. Under the influence of more ecological interpretations stressing the "survival of the fitting," the ethic of collaboration receives much more attention. (p. 65)

Those who subscribe to organizational ecology view the environment as a complex pattern of many organizations and conditions and as something that can be negotiated and shaped. Respondents seem to have interpreted environment in this way as well, although at the time of this study respondents' comments also seemed to imply that some people within the college eventually came back to competition as a necessary strategy:

> *I think we need to support one another more within the college. People here talk about silos all the time. Yes, I think we need to start looking at the college as a whole, and when my program in some way benefits, it doesn't mean that someone else has to lose out. If we work together we can both benefit, and no one has to give up something in order for us to work together. (Instructor B)*

> *The idea we were considering is if we're competing with a technical institute, a vocational college, and a university, the smart thing to do is go around to those places and make an arrangement. Technical institute, you do this; college, you do this; vocational college, this; and university, this. But we're in a competitive environment here, because we're basically vying for the same students. Now if the system rationalized itself, that idea would work, but the system does not rationalize itself. (Administrator E)*

The following question was raised by the researcher: "Is the inability of the system to rationalize itself due in part to competitiveness?" This respondent said:

> *Yes, because the system is based on a competitive spirit. Now, in terms of what, in theory, is the right thing to do, dividing up the pie and collaborating within the system may be based on some insight. But in terms of what you need to survive in this environment, I don't think you can ignore the competitive reaction. Maybe at some point the pendulum will get to that ethics and values thing, and then we'll say, "This is the right thing to do." (Administrator E)*

The concept that some people within the college were considering at the time of this study related to a viewpoint based on organizational ecology, in which organizations work together to create shared futures. Examples of the college entering into partnerships and collaborative endeavors with other organizations existed. One type had been in place for a decade or so and involved partnering with a university:

> *We have partnerships with several programs at a university. In some of our programs, students do the first two years at the college and the next two years at the university. We do not compete with each other. It's a division of labor: College, you're most effective at doing this; and University, you're most effective at doing that. (Administrator E)*

My reading of the college based on an organic view suggests that competition seems to be the historical and more prevalent base in defining the college's relationship with the environment. However, collaboration was beginning to occur to some people as a worthy alternative. Both strategies have their place depending on the situation and depending on perceptions of the environment.

Time

Another theme emerged as participants reflected on their endeavors to work collaboratively. Several were concerned about time. Time does not relate to any one specific organizational metaphor. Because time is an abstract concept, it is made up of a number of metaphorical idioms. In this case, the combination of mechanistic characteristics—such as compartments, which are defined and bounded; coupled with classical management values related to speed, effectiveness, efficiency, and production; along with the perception that the environment offers finite resources—manifests itself in a form of anxiety. Following are some comments offered by respondents as they

thought about working collaboratively. The first quotation relates to space and place. It suggests that a redefinition of boundaries would also have to be accompanied by a redefinition of time:

> *I would like to see a lot of situations where we could have more exchange of dialogue over strategic questions. The problem is, in order to do that under our current structure, we all have to take the same time and be at the same place to accomplish that. And where we are getting squeezed out is that we do not have the time and we do not have the places any more. (Administrator B)*

The following comment appears to suggest that classical management values and time are inextricably linked:

> *I think as we got into more of a technological era, we began living at a faster pace. We do things efficiently. It's more of a management than a leadership principle. But we are always asking ourselves, "Is it more efficient to do things this way or that way?" So I think we are still focussed on efficiency. I don't know, efficiency may have been a concept from the '60s, but I don't think these things are ever lost. (Administrator A)*

In the next two observations, time and energy were viewed as finite resources:

> *I have also found that sometimes the situation, due to circumstances, time, and real-world reality, means you don't have time to collaborate. (Executive Officer B)*

> *There were times when we said, "Do we have the time to be fully collaborative on all of this, and do we have the energy to do it?" because it means that you are spending a lot more time ensuring that information is out there and that it is information that is understood.*

> *Sometimes it's difficult to be patient enough to ensure that we get people up to the same point, but by not taking that time I think we are fragmenting the culture and understanding. There was a point at which everybody in this college knew about collaborative governance. (Administrator C)*

The manner in which people do their work is how they spend their time. It occurs to me in this reading that moving from a closed and controlled system to an open and more participatory system would mean that time has to be spent in different ways. I think that how time is used is an observable, even measurable, statement of values.

Holographic Brains

This reading of the college was undertaken from the standpoints of the brain metaphor. Respondents were aware of and interested in pursuing, of their own volition, notions related to learning organizations; some of the respondents connected collaborative governance principles with learning organization concepts. In terms of viewing the college's collaborative governance initiative from an organization-as-brain perspective, the following observations were instrumental in identifying a theme related to the college as a learning organization:

> *To me one of the next evolutions of collaborative governance is looking at the concept of a learning organization. A learning organization is about the organization's capacity for managing change, and if you're going to have a large capacity, then you're going to need to know and understand your values, your mission, and ways that you really involve people. There are obviously other dimensions to it, but I see a really nice overlap between this and an evolution towards a learning organization. (Administrator C)*

> *I see so many things within the learning paradigm that line up beautifully with the collaborative governance task force principles. One would be the learning climate created by people throughout the organization. The ideal underlying the governance process was that, through working collaboratively, we could cultivate the best possible working environment—one which for staff is the best place to earn, and for student is the best possible place to learn.*

> *Inherent in the collaborative principles is the notion that everybody at the college is involved in education; everybody is involved in creating a learning atmosphere. Metaphorically, we are collaboratively creating a painting. Everyone within the college has a paintbrush in their hand, and each is putting a stroke on that painting, the classroom instructor, the administrator, the custodian, the security guard. It's through the combined contribution of each that the total learning environment is formed. (Executive Officer A)*

Morgan (1997a) spoke about principles related to creating an organization with "holographic brains." One principle is to build the "whole into parts" (p. 102), and one way to do that is to consider how the roles of people can reflect the values and mission of the whole organization. The comments just noted border on this insight.

Another way to build the whole into parts is through corporate culture (Morgan, 1997a, p. 102). One of the difficulties that the college seemed to face with many of its new initiatives was arriving at shared understanding. More examples of this problem are presented in the analytic reading of other study scenarios; however, observations related to collaborative governance and learning organization follow:

> *I think part of the challenge for me is to understand what people's thinking is around the issue of collaborative governance. What does that really mean? (Executive Officer B)*
>
> *The thing we are wrestling with is the notion of whether or not people are in agreement about what collaboration means. My recommendation is that we need to revisit that task force. And another concept our college does not yet understand is the learning organization. (Administrator B)*
>
> *The learning organization? I'm sorry, I don't know what that means. I'm not sure if we understand what the culture of this organization is. I don't think we do. I think we talk about it a lot, but I'm not sure we walk the talk when it comes down to situations where things are difficult. (Administrator D)*

A desired strategy expressed by one participant reinforced the importance of working with people to develop a common and whole understanding of organization:

> *Governance by definition is not just about decision structures like boards and councils. It's really about the atmosphere, culture, climate, and sense of ownership generated by a collaborative or participative process that permeates the entire college—from boardroom to classroom to the custodial team—working together. If you had an opportunity to create a brand new organization, what I would see as probably very intensive would be for everybody involved in the organization to learn about what is really underneath the collaborative governance principles. I take as an example the paradigm shift from teaching to learning and how that is an entirely different concept of what a student is and what a learner is. And unless persons really immerse themselves in that, I'm not sure you would get a very significant impact of the collaborative governance principles within the existing culture and framework. The ideal situation would be to call a time out and have everybody in the organization spend a year working together to revise, revamp, rethink what we are doing—the whole kit and kaboodle. (Executive Officer A)*

Collaborative governance principles serve as a foundation for moving in the direction of developing holographic brains; however, achieving a shared meaning of

what that involves for the college appears to be problematic. The principle considered next may suggest a partial resolution to this situation.

Another principle related to creating holographic brains within an organization is premised on leaders taking action to establish minimum specifications within which people can creatively carry out their activities using their own imagination and intellect (Morgan, 1997a, pp. 114-115). The notion is that these minimum specifications will steer the organization in a particular direction, but people will find their own ways to realize achievement of those specifications:

> *This is a point I would try to stress. We don't always need to be making decisions on everything. We need to be moving forward on some items, which is a sense of decision making, but the culture needs to include some directional issues that are established and it allows for people—individuals who are on the ground and running—to fill in a lot of the gaps. So structure, I think, can work against that, certainly if it is too formalized, if we work in stovepipes or silos. (Executive Officer B)*

That college structure poses barriers to moving into changed operational philosophies was mentioned again. Another person also spoke to the principle of minimum specifications:

> *It's about valuing your work. So we have to find out how we can set in place a system of conditions that will allow people to work to potential within the restrictions that we have here: a system that will allow people to be involved in things that will challenge their creativity and their interest and so on, but within the parameters of the work that they are supposed to be doing and the college is supposed to be accomplishing. (Administrator C)*

Given the insight of the study participants, collaborative governance appears to be a vehicle that could help transform the college into a learning organization, particularly insofar as the holographic brain metaphor is concerned.

Conflict, Interests, and Power

Collaborative governance itself is a political system. In Morgan's (1997a, pp. 161-199) chapter on organizations as political systems, he focussed on issues that deal with conflict, interests, and power. When asked why collaborative governance was introduced, respondents echoed those issues:

> *As I recall, the circumstances actually came out of collective bargaining, and the faculty and the board came to just about an impasse. And as I recall, out of that came this task force on collaborative governance. It was based, I suppose, on some of the notions of the time that if we were more collaborative, there would be less conflict. There would be more joint problem solving rather than taking positions on things.*

> *Empowerment was kind of the thing back in the 1980s; everyone was trying to focus on the key principle which related to empowerment. I really do believe that we did shift the culture. Leadership and management styles were discussed, and there was a certain expectation now that you would behave in accordance with the collaborative governance principles. (Administrator E)*

A desire to change management practices, and hence some power structures, and to minimize conflict may have been the basis for introducing collaborative governance, as this next comment also suggests:

> *I think, in general, collaborative governance was introduced to maintain a healthy working environment for people, rather than an environment that can be poisoned by decree or lack of consensus about something. It could be poisoned by decree from above, which would be noncollaborative governance, or it could be poisoned by the tyranny of the majority as well. That's why consensus is better than just a vote. I guess, to put it in a defensive way, its main motive was to avoid a poisoned atmosphere, and in a positive way its motive was to create a healthy working atmosphere, a working, studying, and learning atmosphere, an atmosphere in which faculty, staff, and students can work comfortably.*

> *I think one thing it did help to address a bit was some sense of hurt that there had been with some individuals in different areas because of the managerial style that was part of the college history. It was the kind of 'stake out your own turf and manage it in your own individual style,' which had been sort of punitively top down in some cases and hurtful to some individuals and not well regulated. So I think people saw some promise of improvement there with collaborative governance; they saw a hope of that anyway because of some painful experiences people had had. (Instructor C)*

> *Why collaborative governance? I think there was a quandary in the minds of the college leadership over how could we have a modern college if it continued to operate along the old lines. (Administrator B)*

Morgan (1997a) noted that "in its original meaning the idea of politics stems from the view that, where interests are divergent, society should provide a means of allowing individuals to reconcile their differences through consultation and negotiation" (p. 154). Following the introduction of collaborative governance, issues arose related to interests, power structures, and ways to deal with conflict. The influence of individual work and career interests plays a notable role in the extent to which collaborative governance is supported, or not. Some illustrations follow:

> *Collaborative governance is part of the culture, yes, but individuals can choose to implement the scenario or not depending on their management styles. (Instructor A)*

> *We have a number of new players who did not have this collaborative governance as part of their history and development. They have come from other experiences and other institutional cultures. So, we have some people who are still trying hard to be quite collaborative in their processes, and then we have introduced other processes that may not attend to collaboration as a priority. I think it gets a little confusing for some people in terms of dealing with transition and change. (Administrator C)*

Possibly, due to familiarity with classical management principles, collaborative governance may not fit with some personal work practices and career aspirations. With the introduction of the new principles, members of the college were faced with defining just what collaborative governance meant in terms of power and management. I asked respondents what the notion of empowerment meant, and one replied:

> *I can remember one of our executive officers saying in spite of all of this we're still not running a democracy here. One person, one vote, and we'll tally up all the votes; and if the ayes have more than the nays, then they win. But this executive officer said that's not the way it is, and that person was right. I think some people might have misinterpreted empowerment a little bit. That is, they may have thought that through collaboration they get to agree or disagree. The reality is they get to participate before the decision is made by influencing it one way or another. (Administrator E)*

I also asked respondents who raised the notion of empowerment in their reflection of the scenario if decision making was shared and if people who gathered together to consider an issue were equals. One respondent said:

> *It doesn't mean that people always necessarily need to be equal, but that when you come to the table, you've got the necessary players there who will be most impacted by a decision and will be able to speak to the implications of it. So we have forums. (Administrator C)*

The majority of respondents noted that the creation of forums to broach organization-wide matters provided more opportunity for participation. This is illustrated in the following response:

> *Prior to collaborative governance, budget decisions would have been made in a tighter group, probably the executive officers' group. With the forums, the principal difference was that the group at large took part in determining the principles and priorities of the budget process. Previously, that would have been top down. So it was a movement from top down to bottom up. (Administrator B)*

Another person spoke about how access to different forums had increased and how more people were invited to attend and provide input. In this person's opinion there was a caveat, however, as follows:

> *There has been increased access and participation in forums, but that participation is more like, "We'll invite you in to consult, but you're really not a part of this. We'll talk to you, or you can make a presentation or come to us for a decision on something." Even that is better than it was, but it's still not genuine collaboration. (Administrator F)*

The forums were established on a college-wide basis. Within parts of the college, however, people were also working to determine how collaborative processes could be developed or refined in their area. These respondents provided relevant comments as follows:

> *We work by consensus. It takes time, but it tends to satisfy the different interests. (Instructor C)*

> *We don't have a general process for ways to get people involved. But when we're working on specific tasks, such as the planning and design of a particular*

> *program, we're probably getting better at looking for ways to ensure that we've got people involved who would be impacted by the decisions. (Administrator C)*
>
> *I think it's becoming more of a part of college culture that we discuss things with a variety of people, rather than, "I'm the person in power; I make the decision, and you live with it." (Administrator F)*

To an extent, personal task and career interests seem to foil collaborative governance. Furthermore, interpretation of the concepts related to empowerment apparently served to both affirm and challenge perceptions of power. From the comments and observations of respondents, I ascertained that some people had difficulty adjusting their realm of power to empower others, whereas others felt comfortable with the style. The extent to which people were committed to bureaucratic power bases may be an important variable, as Morgan (1997a) pointed out:

> The most obvious type of *formal* authority in most organizations is bureaucratic and is typically associated with the position one holds. . . . These different organizational positions are usually defined in terms of rights and obligations, which create a field of influence within which one can legitimately operate with the formal support of those with whom one works. (p. 173)

The following observations raise the problematic tension associated with operating under different organizational positions: collaborative governance principles or the classical management principles:

> *There were people who had always operated around some of these kinds of collaborative principles. So for them the movement was positive, refreshing, and reinforcing.*
>
> *Or we saw some resistance from other people, because it meant giving up power and control. I think some people had trouble because for some administrative roles, giving more information and coming to a broader circle of people to discuss issues and arrive at decisions meant giving up some stuff. (Administrator C)*

It seems evident to me that resistance to collaborative ideals was found not only in management circles, but also in cases where other people within the college did not want to be empowered, as exemplified in these two administrators' comments:

> *There have been situations that could be termed noncollaborative, but not because anybody at the top said, "We're not going to have a collaborative process this time," but because there wasn't the will on behalf of the membership of the group to say, "We're going to take ownership and do this collaboratively." It was like, "These are going to be tough decisions, and we don't want to make them. We want you with formal authority to make them; then we can blame you for them, or praise them, but we aren't responsible for them, so that absolves us of accountability. If we like them, good. And if we don't, we'll be free to criticize because we didn't have anything to do with developing them." (Administrator F)*

> *Some people didn't want to be involved in decision making. They were quite happy in their isolation. "Don't bother me by collaborating or consulting with me. I don't care; just leave me alone. I just want to do my own thing." How do you empower people who don't want to be empowered? (Administrator E)*

As Morgan (1997a) pointed out, "By being a part of a decision-making process one loses one's right to oppose the decisions that are made" (p. 159). There may be some hesitation to participate in decision making due to fear of co-option. However, by not participating in decision-making opportunities, people essentially validate the formal authority granted to people in leadership and management positions.

Self-interest related to work and career activities, concern over losing power, and concern over gaining power culminate in notable problems connected to the realization of collaborative governance as a political system. It occurred to me that although these problems are political at their root, they may eventually manifest themselves in types of psychic prisons.

Traps

Morgan (1997a), in his chapter on organizations as psychic prisons, noted: "Favored ways of thinking and acting become traps that confine individuals within socially constructed worlds and prevent the emergence of other worlds" (p. 219).

Psychic prisons can be thought of as self-made cells that safeguard people from dealing with unwanted or not-understood change. The collaborative governance initiative seems to hold expectations that groups of people would change how they

managed or participated in their work. Some examples related to avoidance of these changes were provided immediately above in the discussion on political characteristics. Along those same lines, another psychic trap in the form of Freudian defense mechanisms of denial was also evident.

Morgan (1997a) explained that denial occurs when people refuse "to acknowledge an impulse-evoking fact, feeling, or memory" (p. 223). An observation made by one of the respondents that might characterize denial follows:

> *There are interesting issues you run into as you dialogue with people in the college. I know there were several programs, might have been a whole section of the college, that talked about collaborative teaching styles, where the faculty member, the student, the learner, and the facilitator would interact and generate opportunities for learning. Where this wasn't the case, one of the inhibitors was again a lack of knowledge base, and the time people would have to apply that knowledge, individually and collectively. Too often the comment was: "The idea of involving students in a collaborative way is philosophically good, but it's not really applicable to our program because our students need more structure and direction. They need the professor, the instructor, to be in charge. That's what their expectations are. And after all, we have 'x' amount of program content that has to be covered, so that model is not really one that is applicable to our situation."*
>
> *If people really delve into the background of these ideas, the basic principles, and work it through to application, they would have, I think, developed a further commitment to the concepts. Learning in a more learner-centered model can be far greater than the teacher-centered model. Where it breaks down is because of built-in assumptions that people have transposed onto a new situation and say, "Yes, that's not a bad idea, but it doesn't apply to us." You often wonder how to create change; certainly one option is reflected in the expression 'You have to change the people or change the people.' It's not as good as ongoing professional development, but the reality seems, some who have developed in a certain mindset for many, many years are not likely to experience a dramatic change. (Executive Officer A)*

The central principle of empowerment, from the classroom to the board room, challenged much traditional thinking. At the beginning of this analytic reading, it was established that people seemed to be at various stages in straddling two worlds: the traditional bureaucratic classical management and the more "modern" collaborative,

empowering ethic of operating and sharing in the organization's evolution. In this way, they had their own favored ways of thinking and acting; they were in their own psychic trap or prison.

Contradictory Tension

Members of the college were involved in a transformation involving movement from what respondents perceived to be an established compartmentalized, competitive, and controlling social construct to a more boundless, collaborative, and empowered social construct. The main theme describing this particular scenario is one of contradictory tension resulting in the need to manage in a state of flux and transformation.

In so doing, as Morgan (1997a) asserted, it is important to recognize the merit of "both dimensions of the contradictions that accompany change" (p. 293). In his view, it is also important to focus on targeting the "right" dimension, while at the same time "finding ways of creating contexts that can mobilize and retain desirable qualities on both sides while minimizing the negative dimensions" (p. 294). As Morgan (pp. 291-292) noted, what may make things more complicated for managers is that they generally end up managing at a micro level, where they deal with many of the outcomes of contradiction; and the contradiction is usually developed at a higher level and likely ought to be facilitated at that higher level. And, as Morgan also asserted (pp. 292-295), although managers cannot always get at the root of the contradiction, nevertheless, they need to manage the resulting paradox.

It occurred to me that because the college introduced empowerment as the central collaborative governance principle, people seemed to encounter the need to manage paradox, such as empowerment versus control and status quo. If this is the case in some instances, Morgan's (1997a) advice to managers may be of interest. His counsel might be that managers need to

> develop *new understandings* that will reshape the mindsets through which a particular paradox is approached. For example, by encouraging a view of empowerment that respects a few critical principles or rules (i.e., the "minimum specs" needed to deliver required control), it may be possible to integrate needs for both empowerment and control. (p. 294);

and to

> seek to create a new context in which empowerment and control can flourish through *new actions* that prototype required behaviors. For example, he or she may create a new empowered environment in relation to special projects, or prototypes of new team-based forms of production that break old patterns of control while recreating their essential contributions in a new form. (p. 295)

Irony

Although the collaborative governance task force recommendations were developed by a representative cross-section of people from within the college, its implementation was, apparently, somewhat autocratically enforced by various top-level officers. That collaboration was demanded by people at the top, who held formal authority, did not go unnoticed, as one of the instructors and an administrator observed:

> *We saw collaborative governance as a bit of a top-down revolution that was imposed by administration. And that was an irony that did not escape anybody. I think it was an irony that was bearable if you thought it was one of those irrelevant things that you observed . . . and had little to do with you. Then, it was just pleasant to observe. (Instructor C)*

> *In terms of collaborative governance outcomes, there was never any option whether or not you implemented this or took part in those recommendations. You did! And if you didn't, you got called up because one of the executive officers would always say, "You have made this recommendation relative to a decision or direction. Can you explain to me what process you went through to come up with this recommendation? Who have you consulted with?" And that questioning took place, especially in the first couple of years after the collaborative governance task force. (Administrator B)*

Summary

In this reading a number of insights surfaced. Mechanistic characteristics in the college seemed to derive from the creation of compartments or silos, which are spaces with recognized boundaries. Because these compartments were perceived by respondents to be well defined, fixed, and rigid spaces, they were also seen as hampering abilities to respond to change; they appear to have exacerbated smooth communication and involvement in decision making; and they could be envisioned as having sharp corners where traditional ideas are trapped. Physical and organizational structures separate communities of people by specialization; organizational structure is in a bureaucratic manner compartmentalized and hierarchical. These organizational characteristics seemed to frustrate the development of collaborative governance.

Organic characteristics involve a consideration of the overall strategies employed in relating to the perceived environment. Although both competition and collaboration were present, people tended to gravitate toward a competitive mode based on the predominant belief that the environment offered limited resources. When contained thinking was combined with a sense of scarcity of resources, the abstract notion of time became tangible as a scapegoat for the tension people experienced while trying to undergo an operational transformation. Time became both a mechanistic clockwork and, organically, a finite resource.

From an organization-as-brain perspective, the collaborative governance principles seemed to have done much to import into the college concepts and behaviors that could support the development of holographic brains, which refers to building the whole into the parts. On the other hand, from an organization-as-culture point of view, the lack of shared meaning surrounding key initiatives appears to exacerbate such progress.

Collaborative governance was a politically inspired initiative, and inherent in that were challenges related to political change: Its notions challenged personal task and career interests, power bases, and modes for dealing with conflict. The political initiative faced many problems. Ironically, the collaborative movement was, to a degree, forced upon some people.

The advent of collaborative governance placed members of the college in a state of dealing with flux and transformation and managing paradox. Physical and operational structures seemed to interfere with collaborative governance. And yet, over a decade of working on a collaborative operational philosophy, apparently no one had implemented structural change to make way for the new practices. A respondent's comment related to this matter closes out this analytical reading:

> *We need a very different planning structure in the college, because right now we have moved in a certain way in collaboration, but we are still very much organized in silos. What I am suggesting is that we establish some planning teams, more or less permanent planning teams around certain major areas, such as academic planning, physical facilities planning, space utilization, human resource planning, and budget. What I think we need for all of these areas are some cross-functional groups, so that planning gets done by a representative group. The groups would come up with the overall planning framework, and this would have to be approved and vetted as required. But to me that would be something that is genuinely collaborative and really lives the spirit and gets around the silos. (Administrator F)*

Organizational Reading for Scenario 2: Curriculum

The second scenario provided to study participants was,

> *Curriculum can be perceived as a space created for learning. This space, however, is heavily influenced by any number of factors, including institutional culture, administrative structures, and divisional and/or program curricular focus and purpose. Within this complex setting a task force brought forward recommendations related to curriculum in the new millenium to be acted upon by all persons, programs, and divisions in the college.*

At the time this study was conducted, curriculum recommendations had been before members of the college for two years. During that period, people reviewed the

work of the task force and reflected on how or whether it had an impact on their area. The comments provided for this study formed an retrospective extension of that ongoing review.

Politics seemed to be an overarching theme of respondent reactions to this scenario. Diverse interests appeared to be possible causes of controversy and contradiction. This, in turn, seemed to result in challenges to face conflict. Furthermore, in the background, it appears that some college traits were sustained in terms of mechanistic compartmentalization, a cultural challenge to work at creating shared meaning, and the practice of organic-based requisite variety to ensure that college curricula mirrored its environments. In addition, some respondents' comments raised the possibility that the brain-like characteristic of double-loop thinking might be improved in the college, and the prospect that members of the college might reflect on a flux and transformation caution against becoming a static egocentric organization. These themes are reviewed in the following.

Diverse Interests: The Political Dimension

Listening to respondents' observations, it seemed that the task force on curriculum entered into the personal task and career spaces of all people in the college who were devoted to the creation and management of teaching or learning opportunities. As I reflected on respondents' comments and revisited the manner in which the study scenario had been presented, it occurred to me that Scenario 2 suggested that curricular spaces were influenced by numerous organizational constructs, but did not hit directly upon the notion that curriculum itself is a socially influenced construct. As I considered that notion and thought about how curricular constructs are built on meaning and perceptions, which stem from interests, the political aspect of this scenario emerged in that members of the college and the task force came face-to-face with the various interests inherent in different professional and academic cultures.

Going back for a moment to the task force on college governance, it seemed that it defined a political system that all people within the college could use to create a healthy work environment. Although collaborative governance challenged some managerial task and career interests, it nevertheless appeared to have met a common need for involvement in governance for the majority of college members. Returning to the curriculum task force, on the other hand, it seemed to have created a highly politicized group situation. Given respondents' comments, it appeared that the task force work was immediately enmeshed in a web of diverse interests and subcultures where people struggled to find common ground, be that in terms of determining whether there was a problem to address or how diverse interests could be brought to the table. This insight emerged from the following statements:

> *Both task forces were collaborative processes. They both had widespread dissemination and collection of information. They were both issues that one would, on the surface, see to be issues of the college. But one of the issues captured the imagination because it was perceived to be a real problem, and the other was not perceived to be a real problem and the feeling was, "Why are we wasting time with this task force, aside from the handful of very dedicated souls who took that task on?"*

> *The point I am getting at as it relates to the whole use of task forces is that the success or failure of the task force may in fact hinge on the questions addressed: Are we posing the right questions? "Are we identifying the right issues?" "And do people have a shared understanding of what the issue is?" The challenge with the curriculum task force, I think, was, I'm not sure that people perceived that anything was wrong. So all of a sudden you get this initiative saying, "We have to examine our curriculum," and the answer is, "I didn't know anything was wrong. And furthermore, I'm not sure I feel very comfortable with that because I thought I was doing what I was supposed to do"; whereas with college governance, most people, when they got into that process, recognized that they probably wanted to be consulted more, which was one of the outcomes of that task force. (Administrator B)*

> *I knew the circumstances of where the governance task came from—a crisis or set of circumstances. But I was thinking, "Where did the curriculum task force come from?" It might have come out of something the board wanted addressed; that might have been it. I don't know if anybody knows where it came from. (Administrator E)*

This same person looked back on another time when an idea had leadership interest, but not much College membership interest. Apparently at some point in the 1980s, a group

> *came up with a whole long list of recommendations related to general education, and absolutely nothing happened as a result of it. I've always reflected back on that as to why nothing happened. I think a lot had to do with people going through the motions, discussing all the things related to general education, and then at the end of the day saying, "That's nice. Set it over there," and getting on with whatever it was they were doing.*
>
> *The other reality, I think, was, it was a lot of people over here deciding what a lot of people over there should do, and the problem is, it doesn't work that way. At that time it was largely up to one section to implement the recommendations, but it never got done because there was never any requirement to do it. There was no felt need. I think there might be a bit of an element of the felt need or lack of felt need involved with the curriculum task force, people wondering "Why are they doing this right now? What needs, what real needs exist?" (Administrator E)*

On a similar note, one recommendation of the curriculum task force related to students taking courses outside of their major area of study to provide opportunities for those who saw a benefit in integrating career and liberal arts education. Problems related to scheduling and program emphases on their core content were identified in the task force report. Even though these implications were raised, the recommendation had remained. The following respondent commented on why the problems had not been pursued:

> *We didn't do it because really it was a political battle, and there really wasn't enough political support for it on the task force or in the college. There were too many other interests—the interests of program heads trying to trim their programs back to remain within a budget; the interest of administration in having program heads do that and keep the content more program focussed, versus using up credits and time in nonprogram areas. But there were enough people who wanted this notion, somewhat related to general education, stated; almost kind of "I told you so. I told you so in the sense that this is part of the history of the place. We're a community college, not a technical institute. We are in favor of general education, I guess, to the degree that we can afford it." So that's the way I read that one. As kind of an idealistic statement of something we hope we can preserve, but there are pretty strong forces saying we can't—saying this will be a tough one. (Instructor C)*

It seems that within the task force recommendations, an endeavor had been made to represent the diverse interests of various groups. The analysis of one participant, paraphrased and summarized in the following and based on an organic view that some species will thrive and others will wither in certain environments, drew attention to how some recommendations based on particular interests contradicted interests in another area. Instructor A suggested that, first, any recommendations that would cost money and any recommendation that involved activities that the college did not do very well now would wither; second, any of the recommendations that dealt directly with a change in instructional practices or having students cross program partitions were in "never-never land" because although some faculty were exploring the notions, there were as many resisting; and third, recommendations that were likely to thrive dealt directly with activities that could strengthen the quality and need for existing programs.

Another participant spoke about controversy resulting from various interests in the following way:

> *Money, turf, and integrity of discipline are issues. . . . We're each concerned with what is in front of us. For example, students are concerned with cost. Instructors are very much concerned with academic freedom to shape their courses as they like. And administrators are concerned with standardization of courses. (Instructor C)*

Other forms of controversy seem to have manifested themselves in terms of contradictions, as illustrated by these two comments:

> *At the same time the budget was saying trim programs, the curriculum recommendations were supporting elective- type expansions to programs. . . . The recommendation that suggests "providing opportunities for students to access learning experiences outside their major area of study" is contradictory to another recommendation that says "curriculum planning activities need to be designed around the specific needs of programs." (Instructor C)*

> *With regard to some of the curriculum recommendations, I think there is a paradox here of it being academically desirable, pedagogically, or just from a learning perspective. But, at the same time that we're doing that, as a result of*

> *budget cuts, programs have had to cut back on the number of credits. So what goes? Not the core curriculum of the program of courses, but the opportunities for study outside the major area or interdisciplinary study and whatever. So in some ways our actions and our words have not been synchronized because the pressure of the budgets is that, if you have to cut something, do you cut the stuff that seems to be supplemental to your program or core to your program? Usually you cut what is supplemental, don't you? (Administrator F)*

As Morgan (1997a) said: "Conflict arises whenever interests collide" (p. 167). He continued:

> Conflict will always be present in organizations. Conflict may be personal, interpersonal, or between rival groups or coalitions. It may be built into organizational structures, roles, attitudes, and stereotypes or arise over a scarcity of resources. It may be explicit or covert. Whatever the reason, and whatever the form it takes, its source rests in some perceived or real divergence of interests. (p. 167)

The presence of diverse interests seemed to result in some controversy and conflict. In the next section, the ways that conflict appeared and was faced are explored insofar as the curriculum task force is concerned.

Facing Conflict

Morgan (1997a) noted that "power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Power influences who gets what, when, and how" (p. 170). In the following, ways that power seems to complicate the curriculum scenario are noted, relative to pluralist management and formal authority from outside the organization.

As Morgan (1997a) said:

> The hallmark of the pluralist manager is that he or she accepts the inevitability of organizational politics, recognizing that because individuals have different interests, aims, and objectives, employees are likely to use their membership in the organization for their own ends. Management is thus focussed on balancing and coordinating the interests of organizational members so that they can work together within the constraints set by the organization's formal goals, which really reflect the interests of shareholders and others with ultimate control over the fate of the organization. (p. 204)

Due to the diversity of interests, the task force events seem to have culminated in an attempt to manage plurality. The following respondent observation suggests that by the time the final report was written, a code language had emerged to frame recommendations in a way that would address the various interests raised through task force research and deliberation, and that would leave room for interpretation and action by the various interest groups. First the study participant commented on how the curriculum recommendations resonated with college culture:

> *Well they all resonated of course, because I think we could all see in a sense the language of the recommendations was sort of a code language behind which there were political realities that had shaped these recommendations. (Instructor C)*

The participant clarified the meaning of a *code language*:

> *It's like Morse code. It's one language that replaces another. Morse code replaces English for purposes of transmission through a particular medium. So you translate it into this code so you can transmit it for this particular purpose. This is what we are doing here. We've translated the political realities of all these various interests and historically based interests into this statement which as of this time says something that we hope will reflect those interests and be appealing to everyone and be useable for everyone and they can go forward with. So it's a code for that purpose.*
>
> *Curriculum for the millenium, like Morse code. We called it curriculum for the millenium because I think at that point we wanted to make a statement about how we would be going forward with curriculum, and we wanted to say it in such a way that people would adopt it. In order to do that we made a code out of the past influences, a code out of all the political forces that had shaped us, and the code was adapted for the purpose of going forward and being appealing. Let's hammer this together in this way so that it translates something we can't say into a code that will be "sayable" and sellable and that we can go forward with. (Instructor C)*

In the case of the curriculum task force, it seems that a pluralist management ideology "that 'we all want different things, so let's talk about and resolve our differences so we can all gain'" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 201) was attempted. Yet, it may have been that the

attempt was not entirely successful because the diverse views could not meaningfully be represented in generic recommendations.

According to study participants, another management challenge arose just as people were considering how or whether the curriculum task force recommendations could be implemented in their area. The challenge was to deal with interests, hence definitions of what is important in training and education, brought forward by an external formal authority: the provincial government. Colleges were significantly dependent on the provincial government for funding at the time, and the government was in a position to control scarce resources based on the realization of their vision of curriculum. Study participants raised this issue in the following ways:

> *Speaking about the curriculum task force recommendations, we gathered all this information and went through this synthesizing process of pulling the information together into a document that I felt the institution really had the potential of owning. People could feel really good about owning this. And then all of a sudden I feel we became sideswiped by this external force of government policy because at the same time that the curriculum recommendations came out, we received a list of wills and won'ts from the government, and there was really very little consultation in putting that together. So, anyway, I think we were sideswiped by that, by those government performance indicators, because all of a sudden people realized the vision they were trying to obtain through the task force was not reflective of the same parameters by which they were going to be measured. And the measurements were very much focussed on some of the kind of views of the political party in power, which is employment, privatization and entrepreneurship.*

> *What I am trying to say is that that set of external parameters was not aligned with what we had decided we wanted to do philosophically, and that left people on the line in a real quandary because they felt some sense of ownership about the curriculum task force results and the information they had, but a sense of uneasiness over the fact that if they did not buy into the government's performance indicator system, they would in fact end up eventually being penalized. So it was really problematic. (Administrator B)*

> *I don't know how you forge a culture that you might want to forge in an institution when you are so severely dictated to by a large granting organization such as the provincial government. They set the culture.*

> *The sad part to me is that people talk as if we had the freedom to build a culture and this cynic is saying, "Don't give me that; don't waste my time on that. Don't take me on retreats and build all this kind of stuff, because it ain't going to fly. When you bring your idea and I bring my idea, it's going to come down to dollars. Bottom line." And that's all those provincial government indicators come down to, which is sad. (Administrator D)*

It seemed, therefore, that this external authority placed members of the college in a position where their survival was threatened unless they adhered to the authority's interests. In this way, the external authority appears to have subscribed to a unitary form of power, where it acted on its perceived prerogative to guide educational institutions "toward the achievement of common interests" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 203) defined by the government itself.

Hence, power appears to have played out and was faced in the curriculum scenario in at least two ways: from a pluralist point of view within the institution and from a unitary point of view outside of the institution. Respondents' comments highlighted these areas of conflict; however, the manner in which these issues were managed was not raised by study participants.

Mechanistic Characteristics

The curriculum scenario appears to have been affected by some mechanistic characteristics. For example, in the first study scenario it was suggested that the college structure was bureaucratic. From a bureaucratic orientation, related to building "sameness" into a system that is supposed to produce certain products, perhaps it was thought that one task force could look at curriculum. As Morgan (1997b) noted:

> Bureaucratic organizations tend to be variety-reducing systems. They take complex and uncertain patterns of information and, through rules, programs, and standardized frames of interpretation, try to filter the variance and create conformity. They try to fix and structure the world outside and inside the enterprise, creating rigidities and an artificial stability that then act as barriers to change. They encourage organization as a disciplined activity. (pp. 17-18)

One study participant commented on this notion in the following way:

> *One of the challenges with the task force process is that the group needs to constantly self-check to ensure they are not homogenizing the decision, that they are not coming out with the least offensive recommendations as far as all parties are concerned. One of the problems with collaborative forms of governance is that you do have a tendency to screen out some of the "far out" because we do tend to homogenize these types of decisions; we do come to consensus on things. (Administrator B)*

As another organizations-as-machines example, it seems that task force recommendations that dealt with students moving among and between program silos were exacerbated, perhaps because of the current structure and culture of the college. Some participants' comments related to this notion follow.

Learning appears to have been a compartmentalized experience at this college. The following respondent's comment seems to suggest that the existing space for learning was a silo or compartment:

> *The programs are all siloed and that was part of the history of development. What you did was you developed a letter of intent, a curriculum, an advisory committee all focussed on that one program. Then you loaded up the two-year silo with all that good stuff. (Executive Officer A)*

As an extension of that notion, it occurred to me in this reading that curriculum can shape or perpetuate status quo at a point in time. Looking inside those program silos from a mechanistic perspective, it seemed that scientific management principles were visible. According to respondents' comments, postsecondary career curricula that prepares people to work in traditional bureaucratic organizations are built on the premise that certain jobs require that specific tasks be performed in certain and efficient ways. For example, one scientific management principle is, "Use scientific methods to determine the most efficient way of doing work. Design the worker's task accordingly, specifying the precise way in which the work is to be done" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 23). Developing curriculum in this way could lead to another scientific management principle, "Train the worker to do the work efficiently" (p. 23). A number of study participants alluded to the stance that colleges are training grounds for many employers

who want efficient and skillful workers, and in order to keep curricula relevant and current, advisory committees from industry contribute to curriculum development. It occurred to me that this curricular orientation would broadly compare with a social adaptation stance, which regards the maintenance of the status quo as the central aim. People are shaped through training to fit the world of work. As Executive Officer B commented, careers are compartmentalized; it therefore seemed to follow that career curriculum was also easily compartmentalized. One study respondent reflected on the impact of compartmentalized, packaged learning:

> *I have discovered that at the end of term most students don't want feedback. They just want their mark. They compartmentalize the course. It's done. They think they don't have to think about it any more. As soon as they walk out of the exam, that's the end of that. Close the book, put it on the shelf; or more likely, sell it. The learning is over. Unfortunate, but true. (Instructor A)*

This comment brings to mind a question regarding whether such a compartmentalized curriculum helps students simply run "the race rather than the race course itself" (Slattery, 1995, p. 77). Perhaps learning opportunities that are boxed and packaged have a distinct beginning and end.

The Development of Organizational Culture

Morgan (1997a) suggested:

> When leaders and managers ask themselves, "What impact am I having on the social construction of reality in my organization?" and "What can I do to have a different and more positive impact?" they penetrate to a new level of understanding about the significance of what they are truly doing. (p. 148)

Apparently, people within the college responded in different ways to the curriculum task force recommendations. Some study respondents' comments provide examples:

> *I don't think there was a requirement to change anything. There was no mandate, change your curriculum, integrate these things, and here's the assessment we're going to use to make sure you did. I didn't see any of that happening. (Administrator E)*

> *The part that relates to incorporating collaborative governance principles into teaching/learning experiences—yes, nice. But to be honest, it's kind of like when those guys get it figured out, have them let us know what it means and we'll incorporate it. (Instructor A)*

> *This document has been helpful because it's perceived of as a college-wide commitment, and in that way staff have more buy-in. I think it is really critical how the college administrative structures impacted the realization of the curriculum task force. There's been a real commitment at the dean's level. (Instructor B)*

It seems that the curriculum recommendations were supported and interpreted with varying degrees of commitment. Hence, the task force recommendations appeared not to have contributed to developing a shared understanding of curriculum direction.

Brain-Like Characteristics

The following comment seems to suggest that the organizational thrust of the college was at times cybernetic, in that curriculum was maintained by monitoring events in the environment and revising curriculum accordingly.

> *We need to go through processes that reaffirm what we are doing, basically conclude that we're on track. It might appear as though we're on automatic pilot, but that's good; we spent a long time refining how to get onto automatic pilot. We just need to know to get off it when something is coming along that's going to disrupt whatever it is that we are doing. (Administrator E)*

Cybernetic thinking can also be compared to single-loop thinking. For some, the task force on curriculum appears to have acted as a catalyst that helped with a transformation from cybernetic to double-loop thinking, which requires that people question their assumptions and operating norms. The following respondents alluded to this notion:

> *I think for us what the curriculum task force allowed us to do was hold up a mirror to allow people to question what they're doing and how they're doing it within the instructional area. (Administrator C)*

> *The curriculum for the millenium certainly caused us to look at what we are doing and why we are doing it in very positive ways. (Instructor A)*

On the other hand, mechanistic and bureaucratic orientations related to granting authority to management to do the thinking, and perceiving the environment as being relatively stable may have hampered progress toward double-loop thinking. Some study participants observed:

> *One of the things I am finding takes place in this environment quite frequently is that people do not challenge their assumptions. When you think of it, for an educational institution, that's a shocking thing. But it happens very, very frequently here. (Administrator B)*

> *There's a small group in the college that gets together to talk about teaching techniques. And I am fully in support of that because that's the type of discussion I'm missing. I can get it if I seek it, and go to certain people and talk, but it doesn't just happen. (Instructor A)*

Hence an insight that emerged in this reading related to members of the college being at different stages of thinking, from single to double-loop.

Organic Characteristics

As was noted earlier, college programs appeared to emulate the communities with which they identified and served. Therefore, the college exemplified notions of requisite variety that in Morgan's (1997a) words relates,

> ... to the idea of differentiation and integration, . . . which states that the internal regulatory mechanisms of a system must be as diverse as the environment with which it is trying to deal. For only by incorporating required variety into internal controls can a system deal with the variety and challenge posed by its environment. Any system that insulates itself from diversity in the environment tends to atrophy and lose its complexity and distinctive nature. Thus requisite variety is an important feature of living systems of all kinds. (p. 41)

The following respondent's comments seem to suggest that the college needs to strive for requisite variety:

> *If you think about it, to get the first year or two of a university degree in this city there are now about six or seven alternatives. Do we need six or seven alternatives? Yes, we probably do to represent all the tastes of whoever is in the community, or we all wouldn't survive. So I think that there's more consumerism now in the educational market. . . . Students shop around. (Administrator E)*

> *We're trying to put out a different product by offering a particular series of courses in a program so students come out of the program with different skills than they would have coming out of another educational institution. In marketing terms, that's product differentiation. We're hopefully giving employers out there a better product that more meets their needs. Looking at it with a marketing hat on, how can we sell ourselves as being different? (Instructor A)*

By pursuing notions such as requisite variety, the college might possibly guard against becoming an egocentric organization stuck in a particular way of seeing and doing things. Morgan (1997a) explained this concept as follows:

> Egocentric organizations draw boundaries around narrow definitions of themselves and attempt to advance the self-interest of this narrow domain. Part of the problem rests in the very idea of what it means to be "an organization." The concept implies an entity, "a thing," something with a discrete existence.
>
> . . . An organization "sees itself" as separate, views its "environment" with separateness in mind, acts to sustain its separateness, interprets reactions to those actions from a separatist viewpoint, and so on. Many of the social ills of our time are associated with this kind of egocentric enactment and the kind of free-standing individualism it implies.
>
> Egocentric organizations tend to see survival as hinging on the preservation of their own fixed and narrowly defined identity rather than on the evolution of the more fluid and open identity of the system to which they belong. (p. 260)

The following comments seem to affirm the importance of continuing to examine, define, and rethink college environment:

> *For the next stage of development, I think we need another sort of task force, one that will enable us to stand back and examine our college now. Out of this we might realign our practices with current community issues. How do our programs relate to those community issues? Might we integrate several stand-alone programs around community issues or themes—to ensure our college is truly responsive to the community we are mandated to serve? Given that we started many of our programs almost 30 years ago, what should we now be doing differently? (Executive Officer A)*
>
> *College leadership is saying we have to refocus our research efforts towards the outside, towards what's going on in the business world, what's happening out there rather than internally focussed research about how our programs are going. The argument is, we do a lot of looking at ourselves and not much looking at the community that we are supposedly serving. (Administrator F)*

> *We do very little in the way of formalized scanning of what the needs of the community are going to be. We do get pockets of information from advisory committees and curriculum development panels that keep our existing program curricula up to date. And that's very specific information. I think we need some people out there digging up more general information. Yes, we seize opportunities that are arising now, but a needs assessment could point us in the direction of other opportunities; and if we're not looking for those and we've seized the one that happens now, we've missed a whole bunch of others that we weren't aware of. (Instructor A)*

Although members of the college have used notions related to requisite variety in the updating of their program curricula, the following respondent suggested that an extension of that thinking might be what the college might pursue next in its exploration of curriculum. This option appears to be premised on the idea that there were too many diverse interests in curriculum within the college to deal with in one task force:

> *I think the reality is, there cannot be only one curriculum task force. There have to be all kinds of task forces on the curriculum because it's that diverse. You can't look at the whole curriculum in one task force. You can look at governance using one task force because it's limited. To get everybody, to get real understanding of the curriculum, you would have to have all the people present who develop and deliver curriculum, and the task force only had representatives of some curricular elements.*
>
> *The curriculum is actually an interaction, along the lines of what we do and how we do it. Now the governance thing, I suppose, is an interaction of some processes and how we behave, but nowhere near as broad. The curriculum for the future task force could only take a snapshot. And it doesn't look at the whole curriculum; it couldn't possibly! You would need such a wide-angle lens to see it all that you wouldn't see anything. (Administrator E)*

In hindsight, many smaller interest-compatible groups could have been formed to create their vision for the curricular trek into the year 2000. As a result of exploring those group visions across the college, it may have been possible to identify organization-wide themes that could subsequently be forged into broad, guiding reference points related to shared curriculum meaning. One study participant highlighted the complexity of curricular social constructions:

> *Governance is something that we share. We don't share curriculum because we are all parts of the curriculum, if you know what I'm trying to say. There's nobody who experiences all of the curriculum. You can't possibly. It's so diverse. And the curriculum people experience in one division is not experienced in another; but on the other hand, the governance things that one division experiences could be experienced in other divisions, and some are common across the whole institution. Now, I don't know if that gives any insight or not. It's like knowledge. You can't study all of knowledge at one time; you can only study parts of it, elements of it. But to try and look at it all at once, you can't see it. And if you take that approach, we've looked at specific elements or aspects of our curriculum in this task force, and maybe there should be ongoing curriculum task forces to continue to look at various elements. (Administrator A)*

The organic characteristics outlined in this analytical reading seem to suggest that curriculum and environment are inextricably linked. Respondent's comments indicated that members of the college were aware of the importance of nurturing requisite variety, of the potential danger of being egocentric, and the need for ongoing examination of environments and curriculum. Further, respondents alluded to the complexity of curriculum and suggested that one task force may not be adequate to explore all aspects of curriculum.

Summary

Given this reading of organization, it seems possible that curriculum was predominantly a reification of ideologies found in cultural, organic, and political realms. It seemed to be dependent on a web of relationships involving people, their lived-in "worlds," and their interests. Further, it seemed that curricular planning tended to be implicated with, if not a major shaper of, the college's operational and physical structure, and as such, some mechanistic orientation appeared evident. In addition, task force recommendations seemed to have been written in a "generic" manner, and this could be interpreted as a form of mechanistic homogenization or possibly as an organization-as-brain minimum specifications approach to providing leadership. It

seems possible that the task force was a catalyst for the emergence of political situations, and as such, as one respondent noted, one task force may not have been the appropriate strategy for considering curriculum issues. In an organic sense, it was apparent that people developed curriculum as they perceived their environments. Mirroring environments was described in this analytical reading as practicing the principles of organic requisite variety. On the other hand, notions arising from the flux and transformation view of organization caution that if people are stuck in a fixed perspective of their environment, they may run the risk of constructing what is termed an *egocentric* organization; that is, an organization that draws "boundaries around narrow definitions of themselves" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 260). Or, in a narcissistic sense, people may attempt to achieve "a form of self-referential closure in relation to their environments, enacting their environments as extensions of their own identity" (p. 256).

Hence, members of the college might question how they perceive their environments. They might ask themselves, "What are the 'communities' to which we are bound, and what are our 'environments'?"

Organizational Reading for Scenario 3: Mission

Participants were provided with the following scenario:

> ***The summary mission statement for the college is, "Lifelong learning, responsive to the community." The phrase is deeply embedded in the consciousness of all employees and is easily and often stated. College members' thoughts and actions are greatly influenced by the notion that the college's mission is to "respond" to communities or environments. There are at least two ways that this "responsive" mode can be understood.***
>
> ***In the first mode, members of the college respond to an environment made up of opportunities and threats "out there." They make plans to deal with the situations they discover, and then analyze how successful they were in surviving against the outside world. In the second mode, college members do not think of the community or environment as a domain separate from the college. Rather, they know that their interactions on behalf of the college help to create the very conditions that ultimately shape the community or environment within which***

they work. They understand that they create conditions so that they evolve as part of and as full participating members of the community or environment.

This scenario was philosophical at its root and, perhaps more than the other study scenarios, reflected the type of contemplation that was the genesis of this study. The scenario was motivated by assumptions that people make decisions based on their views of *the*, *their*, or *a* world. In this scenario, an attempt was made to provide two different stances relative to perceptions of community and environment. One stance is related to the notion that environment is a concrete reality out there that somehow exists and is created in some manner external to oneself; or, considering an alternative stance, that the environment is perceived from within, is socially and personally constructed and created on an ongoing basis as forms of perceived reality are endorsed, collectively or individually.

Recognizing that all readings of organization are indeed partial and guided by the manner in which scenarios were presented, it appears in this scenario that respondents were somewhat more accustomed to responding to a tangible environment "out there" than they were with accepting more personal involvement in the creation of environment. At this point in preparing another reading of organization, I recalled the competitive response to environmental relations outlined in Scenario 1 and the organizational emulation of environments "out there," considered under the notion of requisite variety in Scenario 2. This provided some sense of the tendency for people to view environment as a type of concrete entity separate from themselves. This possibility is further explored in the following, where questions are raised about characteristics of environment that might relate to mechanistic notions.

Outputs: Environments as Machines

As a result of filtering respondents' comments through my own way of seeing and feeling, a motif emerged related to the notion that the college, like a machine, could produce outputs required by the environment "out there." The "outputs" are workers

who are "programmed" for the marketplace "out there." This reading resulted from the following respondents' comments:

> *Our students will benefit from having skills that focus on what the marketplace needs, because they are going to be "sellable." I've met employers who say they like our students. We want them to keep liking them. And unless we keep up with the trends that are happening there, we're going to lose our place.*
>
> *We are out there right now, but we have to make sure we are out there forever and forever, or as long as there is a need for us to be there, because if we don't maintain that, then our graduates won't fit the workplace. (Administrator A)*
>
> *I think we have tried to keep the perspective that the work of our students will meet the needs and make a difference in the lives that they serve. That motivates our staff to be here—that our students will make a difference in the lives of the people they work with. (Instructor B)*
>
> *There is a lot of competition in the marketplace for students. Students, in a sense—it's a terrible thing to say—but they are becoming kind of a commodity, and we need them as input for our organization. (Administrator E)*

It appears that a possible definition of being responsive to the community entails training people for the world of work and therefore, it seems, contributing to the maintenance of the status quo.

Some participants seemed to struggle between a reactive responsive stance involving competition for finite resources "out there" and a type of involved responsive stance where they more consciously evolve as part of a system of which they are a part and are co-creators. A meaningful insight that the following respondents conjured up in this reading was that this very scenario probably had been oversimplified in its presentation, and in actuality the question behind the scenario was more complex than could reasonably be broached in this manner in this study. These respondents demonstrated a tentative stance:

> *This one was an interesting one for me, and I had to be really honest with myself when I sat down and thought about it. Where, when, and how have I acted in the mode of a separate domain "out there"? I would have to say that, honestly, pretty much all the time. And this would come from working in a market-driven*

organization where we are small to medium-sized players in the marketplace. There are tons of people out there competing with us.

With regard to shaping or creating conditions that help a wider system evolve, that requires more thought on my part I think. That's suddenly a magnitude bigger in terms of the impact that you could have, what you have within your programs, and how you shape those programs and shape the thinking and self-esteem of the individuals in the program. (Instructor A)

In marketing there is a great debate as to what extent marketers can shape the preference of consumers as opposed to reacting to the needs of consumers; and in marketing, yes, marketers can shape preferences. So to take a perfectly passive approach and simply be reactionary I don't think is the best strategic direction for the college. I do think there has to be a balance between shaping and reacting, and that's why I would like to see our vision and mission statements revisited, because they are kind of reactionary statements right now.

But becoming a shaper as opposed to a responder, this is probably the area where my thinking is less defined and less organized, because I think I have reached the stage where I recognize that that's possible, but I'm not sure how, because I keep reverting back; and I'm thinking, "Yes". But in shaping we develop something that is responsive. (Administrator B)

There may have been a time when the motto was more unidimensional in its meaning, and that meaning more easily internalized. But today shared meaning seems to be blurred. Perhaps this is so, because times have changed, and in addition to training and educating, people in education are also asked to engage in the business of ensuring financial stability. What seems to remain, however, is that community and resources are implicated with one another in some form of a mutually beneficial relationship. The following respondent seems to have implied that collaboration within the postsecondary educational system is a preferred approach:

The mission statement is really a slogan. It's a slogan that is catchy, and people can pick up on, but it is not something that can give us a lot of direct guidance. One of the issues around responsiveness is to find out how we can work in a more synergistic way in the system. (Executive Officer B)

However, as the second and third respondents tended to suggest, creativity driven by competition for survival appears to be a familiar environmental stance:

> *A big issue for me of this "responsive to the community" notion is, does that mean we will respond with something that will show a profit, or that we will respond with something that will fulfill an educational need? I guess it is a mixture. We have to be a mixture. We are hybrids. Yes, that's who we are. We're funded by public money, and we have to be responsible to the community and provide some things that are responsible but not profitable. Otherwise we're a store. You come here and buy what you want. (Instructor C)*

> *I think our Division is just beginning to realize how many opportunities there are for entrepreneurial activities. It almost seems like that's a bad word in some ways, like that's a business management thing, and because we deal with people, we don't try to make money. My understanding is education is business and we can't be losing money and survive. And entrepreneurial is not just making money, it's doing what we do in different ways and being creative and looking at partnerships and collaboration in places that we never have before. (Instructor B)*

Because people tend to perceive that resources are scarce within their environment, "being responsive" has taken on a marketing tone compared with the notion that learning needs in the community will be addressed.

Competition and Requisite Variety: Environments as Organisms

As noted above, the sensing that people respond to environments "out there" that have finite resources could also place the reading of this scenario within an organic perspective. The population ecology view might come to mind in that it focuses on the notion that species are dependent on the resources within their environment, and if necessary must compete for those resources. On the other hand, for some respondents, environments were not so bounded and an organization ecology point of view also seemed evident in that some respondents viewed their role as ensuring the college evolved as part of a larger system. Furthermore, the concept of requisite variety might also be considered in this scenario because it appeared that many people within the college tried to emulate the complexity of their perceived environments in their programming.

Mission Statement as Psychic Prison and Flux and Transformation

An overall sensing derived from respondent's comments was that the mission itself might be a psychic prison. Being "responsive to the community" could suggest that there is a community "out there" to respond to, and that key notion in itself might limit attempts to viewing environment as something created by members of the college as they participate in the evolution of a larger ecosystem of which they are a part.

At the same time, the flux and transformation concept of "autopoiesis" could also be a perspective to consider. While the organic notions place members of an organization in the position of being external observers of environment, the flux and transformation notion of autopoiesis refers to the interest of any living system to make reference only to themselves in the context of a closed environment suited to their own self-renewal.

Summary

Philosophically, it seems that members of the college tended to perceive that they were separate from an environment to which they responded: by emulating it, by drawing resources from it, and by defining it in various magnitudes. The college appears to exist, insofar as career education is concerned, as a reification of its environment's values and needs, and in this way career training and education seem to be implicated in a curricular focus described as social adaptation. In this mode, the college contributes to the maintenance of the day's status quo. As one respondent said:

> *The genius of the community college is that it gains its unique strength and character by being an integral part of the community. It measures its success by the bridges it builds with the community it's designed to serve. The term* community *in our name is a powerful reflection of an egalitarian philosophy, of proudly and purposefully aligning with community needs. That really differentiates us from all other postsecondary institutions. (Executive Officer A)*

A number of organizational characteristics blended into a type of pro forma. The environment seemed to be perceived as bounded by finite resources. A reaction to this

limited environment is to compete for survival, whether that be through competition within the bounds or through collaboration by expanding the bounds. Dependency appears to be circular; inputs necessary for college survival seem to be drawn from the environment, and in reciprocation, outputs are tailor-made for the environment. All in all, at the very base, notions of autopoiesis may prevail: Each living organism is engaged in maintaining its own survival. If along the way particular organisms' activities support other organisms' survival, so be it. Again, it seems possible that the college could run the risk of being an egocentric organization, because it seemed to work assiduously at relationships that affirm its current identity. A caution to consider is that the mission statement itself might be a psychic prison, preventing members of the college from crossing or broadening boundaries. In conclusion, the following may be worthy of some contemplation: *"Boundary spanning should be a requirement; an attribute that we want everyone to look at, to be caring about, and to be paying attention to" (Executive Officer B).*

Organizational Reading for Scenario 4: Task Force Process

The fourth scenario provided to study participants was,

> *In the past decade, the college used task forces to consider two areas: governance and curriculum for the millenium. An aspect of task forces is that they create attention, interpretation, and recommendations that impact on an organization's operation. By virtue of their mandate, size, and composition, and because they focus only on some aspects of highly complex situations, task forces may be limited in their ability to identify all possible directions that could benefit the college.*

Ironically, the worries that manifest themselves in this scenario seem similar to types of questions that could be addressed in terms of Morgan's (1986, 1997a) organizational analysis method. Task force process in this reading, however, appears to have carried orientations related to organization as brain, culture, and as political system.

Brain

The predominant theme that seemed to emerge related to task force process was organization as brain. When discussing recommendations and directions brought forward by task forces in general, the opportunity for double-loop thinking—that is, thinking critically about proposed stances—was raised by the following respondent:

> *I think it's part of the goal of academe in general. The goal is to kind of develop that skepticism in the individual. If an individual has a critical perspective on the system, and while the individual is obviously a part of the system, it's a goal of that individual to achieve an independent perspective. So we all tend to have it, and we all tend to see ourselves as independent and critical of the system we're in. (Instructor C)*

Another brain characteristic relates to holographic design. It seemed, in the opinion of one respondent, that task forces provided a holographic process that contributed to building the whole into the parts:

> *There were two or three people from the division who participated on a college task force. They had an opportunity to hear what was going on in the college community and then to have discussions in our own division and to look at how we would operationalize or talk about some of these things. I can recall a number of discussions in our own division really focussed on trying to understand some of the comments that were made in the task force discussions and trying to understand some of the reactions to emerging recommendations. (Administrator C)*

And the same person later said:

> *Task forces, for all their limitations, were really the embodiment of collaborative governance principles in that they provide people with that opportunity for involvement and allow people enough time to go from, "I don't understand enough about the college; I don't understand how all these things fit together" to another level of understanding. Those task forces were a professional development opportunity. (Administrator C)*

Another principle connected with working toward holographic design, associated with the brain metaphor, is the importance of redundancy. On the surface, redundancy may sound like an unlikely goal given the general recent history of organizational downsizing and perceived scarce resources. One respondent commented

on the unlikelihood that task forces would be among methods used by the college in future years: *"And whether we have got the slack resources in our system now to have 16 or 50 people spend two years working on a college task force, I don't know. I don't think we do" (Administrator C).* However, redundancy, insofar as holographic brains is concerned, means building "parallel processing" into the organization's system. The process of having individual persons or teams working through multiple drafts of information, be it to undertake a project or consider new organizational initiatives and such, seems not only to inform people within an organization of initiatives under way, but also to encourage double-loop learning, creativity, and innovation.

According to respondents, and from a brain perspective, task force process seemed to contribute to double-loop thinking, and to holographic design by building the whole into the parts through creating a system of networked intelligence that supported parallel processing of information and ideas.

Culture

The task force process seemed to provide opportunities for people to share their notions of culture within the college. As Schwab (1969) said:

> A college or university is a society and not a brotherhood. It is constituted of differentiated groups or classes and not one body of peers. There are professors. There are students. There are administrators. There are nonacademic employees. As in any society, these differentiated groups come into being and exist—or ought to exist—for the well-being and effective functioning of the others. If students are to be educated, teachers must teach; and if teachers are to teach, someone else, administrators and nonacademic employees, must supply the necessary conditions of their work—to take only one way around the circle. (p. 258)

The following respondent noted how the task process provided a forum to learn about different cultures and views:

> *One of the benefits I saw coming out of task force process was that it was a kind of team-building activity that was occurring, and without that, then you tend to get back into your own little culture and your own ways of doing things with*

people that you have something in common with and who see things the way you do, and who hold that similar worldview, if you like. And so we get into reinforcing the fragments and various components. When we come together to try and make those collaborative decisions, it becomes more difficult to only see your own way of doing things because those cultures are strong in their own way. (Administrator C)

Three other respondents spoke about their involvement in task forces or college committees as a means to facilitating their entry into college culture and operation:

I was on one task force for a short period—not for very long, six months or something like that. So I remember sitting in the room and listening to the discussion, and it was one of my ways of introducing myself to the college and finding out what was going on. Coming to the college and seeing this kind of process in place was a very exciting thing to see. That you would have people from all over the organization at a variety of levels sitting in a room talking about how the organization is and ought to be run indicated to me a very open organization. (Instructor A)

I came from another organization and I wanted to acclimatize, and so I sat on a committee looking at a college-wide issue, and that was a good acclimatizer for me. (Instructor C)

Whenever I have worked on cross-college committees, that has been so helpful because I have, number one, heard the perspectives of other people. I have this belief that in our differences we grow, but in our sameness we connect. I have learned that other people have very similar problems to what we have, and here we are in another building thinking we're the only ones with this problem! Hearing how they resolve their problems has helped me. And the personal contact has helped too, because now I feel that I could go and talk to somebody about a project they have in mind, because now I know that person a little. (Instructor B)

Respondents indicated that task force process was useful in creating an increased understanding of the various subcultures and the overall culture found in the college. It appeared, then, from a culture perspective, that this process contributed to the development of shared meaning.

Political System

Schwab (1969) also pointed out that members of each group have their own special areas of expertise and responsibility and, accordingly, "legitimate differences of interest exist among the group members of a society" (p. 259). As discussed earlier, interests are political, and therefore it is important to provide ways for people to negotiate differences and arrive at some understanding regarding how they will move forward. According to the following study participant, it seems that task forces offer such a process: *"I can't see how you can possibly hammer out compromise statements through any other method than a task force. You just have to get everybody together and have them haggle it out" (Instructor C).*

The following respondent indicated that task forces, as a collaborative, consensus-oriented process, need to address "common" and "real" college issues:

> *The essential difference between the collaborative governance task force and the curriculum task force is back to this issue that people were not viewing the curriculum task force as addressing a real problem. They didn't perceive there was a problem with curriculum, so why would a task force have any weight? Whereas collaboration, they knew there was a problem, they knew that decision making was too hierarchical, and they wanted to be part of effecting a change. But when curriculum came up, it was like, "What's the problem?" So I'm harking back to my old point that there has to be a shared understanding of what a problem is. (Administrator B)*

When considering whether members of a task force settle for "good enough" decisions based on limited information, one study respondent said:

> *Do we ultimately settle for good enough based on limited information? In reality, probably. But is there a way that we could get any better information or better implementation in the organization of the concept? Probably not. And my comment here is, good ideas aren't good unless they are implemented. You can have all the good ideas you want and write them in reports, and that's wonderful; but if nobody does anything about them, it's a waste of time. And I repeat, we need the buy-in, and the task force is one way to get a group of committed people, or a large group of committed people, to sell the idea in the organization. So I think task forces are helpful in that regard. Are they efficient? No, absolutely not.*

> *But I think the task force process is very useful because it gets a lot of people involved. (Instructor A)*

Task forces appear to exemplify collaborative decision making. Study respondents have indicated that task forces provide learning opportunities for participants and opportunities for people to bring forward their own points of view and state their task and career interests. They also seem to provide opportunities for people to participate in leadership roles and to develop trust and partnerships with others. In addition, through the task force process, people seem to have an opportunity to create shared meaning and direction and to venture outside of their own silos. Task forces appear to provide all these opportunities to members of an organization. Perhaps official leaders and managers who support task force process have wrestled themselves away from the notion that leadership means control. As one respondent said:

> *The danger that somebody in power runs in setting up a task force is, members of the task force develop something that is out of that person's control. Task force members create concepts, ideas, whatever, that might be off that person's track, not where he or she wants to go' and as a leader in an organization, that's probably the greatest risk you run, and that scares a lot of people as leaders. (Instructor A)*

Summary

Task forces tend to encourage the brain-like characteristics of double-loop thinking, networked intelligence, and holographic design. They also provide a forum where members of various college subcultures can work toward shared cultural meaning and become aware of other cultural aspects within the organization. From a political system point of view, task force process may fuse, or possibly diffuse, diverse task and career interests, and because of its collaborative nature, may be threatening to those who are accustomed to traditional power bases and control over decision-making.

Overall, the process was viewed in a positive light by most respondents because it enhanced communication, supported principles of a learning organization, and helped to strengthen shared meaning.

Conclusion

Organizational readings for each study scenario were undertaken in this chapter. As Morgan (1997a) pointed out, "The process of reading a situation is always 'two-way.' In trying to discern the meaning of a situation, we create an interplay between the situation itself and the frames through which we are trying to tie it down" (p. 373). The process of viewing organization through eight metaphorical lenses has broadened the scope of reflection and in turn brought to the forefront characteristics of organization that may have been overlooked or beyond understanding in the absence of this type of comprehensive analysis.

Chapter IV includes reflective readings of each scenario. Using Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method, the organizational characteristics framed in this chapter are summarized in diagnostic readings, and subsequently considerations for possible next steps are outlined in critical evaluation storylines.

CHAPTER IV

REFLECTIVE READING OF FOUR SCENARIOS

This chapter has three sections. It begins with an interpretation of the reflective reading method presented by Morgan (1997a) and the specific methods I used. This is followed by reflective readings for each of the four study scenarios. Third, a commentary is provided on the possible courses of action that emerged from the reflective readings.

Method Involved in Reflective Reading

Morgan's (1997a, 1997b) presentation of the reflective reading method in *Images of Organization* and in *Imaginization: New Mindsets for Seeing, Organizing, and Managing* is embedded in case study applications. I found I had to piece the method together as I worked through case studies, rather than having an opportunity to gain an overall understanding of the method prior to launching into its application. In the following, I extrapolate from *Images of Organization* what I believe are Morgan's key points.

Interpretation of Morgan's Reflective Reading Method

Morgan (1997a) opened his discussion on reflective reading methodology with the following statement: "The advice drawn from earlier chapters . . . is this: learn how to generate, integrate, and use the insights of competing metaphors. Use them to understand and shape the situations that you are seeking to organize and manage" (p. 355).

A prerequisite to undertaking the reflective reading method is the acquisition of theoretical knowledge through which situations can be viewed in a variety of ways. The theories that Morgan (1986, 1997a) anthologized under the eight metaphorical headings in *Images of Organization* provide such a foundation. These theories span

organizational, scientific, and psychological fields. Another prerequisite is the ability to identify and apply various theories that may provide insight into a situation and identify strategies for possible next courses of action.

The reflective reading method comprises two processes: diagnostic readings and critical evaluation storylines. Their premises, activities, and features are noted below.

According to Morgan (1997a), premises for conducting a diagnostic reading require "that we remain open to as many possibilities as we can" (p. 361) and that "we strive to gain as comprehensive an understanding as possible" (p. 361) of the situation. Morgan's caution is that people must not settle on one point of view as *the point of view* and that they not move to a critical evaluation of a situation prior to identifying features of the situation from the various metaphorical views; hence, the importance of undertaking diagnostic readings. Nevertheless, Morgan also recognized that the activities of diagnostic reading and critical evaluation are intertwined and are not entirely separate or sequential. He noted that "as we read a situation through different metaphors we inevitably begin to form an evaluation as we become attracted to one line of interpretation over another" (p. 368).

The main activity involved in a diagnostic reading is to highlight and summarize features of the situation from various theoretical points of view. Morgan (1997a) advised that "this reading is schematic, highlighting how different metaphors can draw us into different features of the case" (pp. 360-361). The activity involves reading the situation through various metaphorical texts and highlighting what appear to be salient and meaningful features of the organization. Morgan's diagnostic readings are succinct, capturing broad-based insights under the headings of each metaphor. His format is replicated as closely as possible for the diagnostic readings presented in this study.

In terms of diagnostic reading features, Morgan (1997a) emphasized that "a good diagnostic reading seeks to generate a comprehensive range of insights that allows us to discern the unfolding tendencies and character of a situation" (p. 361).

Prior to moving on to the next process, critical evaluation storyline, Morgan (1997a) emphasized the importance of identifying the point of view brought to the evaluation. Examples are that the reader of a situation may come from a managerial, management consultant, social critic, or detached academic standpoint and that the features of the situation that arise, then, will naturally stem from that particular point of view and set of interests. He explained the process as follows:

> This is where the critical evaluation stage of the reading process comes into play. It involves creating what may be described as a kind of storyline that can advance our ends. Whereas the diagnostic phase generates a range of insights that can open avenues for creative interpretation, the "storyline" seeks to bring them together in a meaningful way. (p. 361)

Following is the premise upon which a critical evaluation storyline is developed:

> As we "read" through various metaphors, we find ourselves being "pulled into" their ways of seeing. We begin to identify key insights. . . . Some of the insights strike us as particularly resonant or meaningful and worthy of further investigation. We choose to investigate in more depth. . . . We find ourselves asking more questions. (Morgan, 1997a, p. 362)

Through this type of interaction among ways of seeing a situation, certain views surface as particularly relevant to the situation and organization under study, and a storyline begins to emerge. Morgan (1997a) suggested that the critical evaluation storyline activity is as follows: "The challenge, of course, is to convert this diagnostic reading into a storyline that can help us deal with the complexity. Thus, . . . we may find ourselves developing an integrated perspective" (p. 364). Features of a critical evaluation include: "A storyline implies a course of action" (p. 364); it "ultimately involves a prioritization of insights generated through one's diagnostic reading" (p. 365).

The storyline identifies a dominant frame, where priority is given to insights generated by one of the metaphorical views; and supporting frames, where "the insights of the other metaphors are brought in as subsidiary themes" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 366).

Morgan noted: "The development of a storyline is always a highly relativistic affair, depending on the precise circumstances being faced" (p. 366).

In general, Morgan (1997a) observed that

> An effective diagnostic reading and storyline hinges on an ability to play with multiple insights with a view to integrating them into a coherent pattern. In a way, the metaphors, theories, and frames through which we implicitly scan the situations that we are trying to understand act as a kind of "radar" or "homing device" that draws our attention toward key features of a situation. (p. 368)

Throughout his work, Morgan emphasized that each metaphorical view reveals and conceals at the same time. Each view, in and of itself, is partial and brings to the fore certain features of a situation. Another interplay that contributes to partiality occurs between the readers of a situation and how the metaphorical views manifest themselves in their realm of understanding. The reading process is characterized by an inherent partiality. Morgan (1997a) noted that: "there can be no single theory or metaphor that gives an all-purpose point of view. There can be no 'correct theory' for structuring everything we do" (p. 348). And,

> whoever we are, it is impossible to obtain a complete point of view. Our perspectives always have horizons and limits dictated by the factors that we implicitly or explicitly value and deem important. We are back to Albert Einstein's point that our observations are always shaped by the "theory" through which we see. (p. 371)

By encouraging people to view situations in a variety of ways, to synthesize those views into a base for evaluation, and to generate possibly creative courses of action, Morgan (1997a) provided a type of toolbox and blueprint for how to connect "with the truly significant dimensions of a situation" (p. 372) and develop "creative insights that open new action opportunities or give new leverage on difficult problems" (p. 372). He observed:

> If we dwell on the impossibility of achieving an all-embracing understanding or comprehensive insight, we will surely be depressed and overwhelmed. But, if we turn the problem around and focus on what can be achieved by refining our interpretive skills, a much more positive message emerges. (p. 371)

As a final note on the reflective reading method, Morgan (1997a) also emphasized that readings are not fixed; nor are they absolute. In his words, "They will change over time. They vary with the objectives and perspectives of the reader. Although the process and skills are consistent, the content and product vary" (p. 369). He further explained: "The criteria for judging an effective reading are . . . not objective. They are pragmatic" (p. 372). The manner in which I applied Morgan's reflective reading method is described next.

Reflective Reading Method in This Study

In the following, I review steps undertaken to arrive at the reflective reading stage, the manner in which diagnostic readings were developed, and how the study questions guided the critical evaluations.

In preparation for the reflective reading stage, in Chapter III I pieced together an organizational context for each of the four study scenarios based on the manner in which participants' comments seemed to reflect the eight metaphorical views found in Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization*. The organizational contexts developed in Chapter III serve a purpose similar to Morgan's case studies presented in *Images of Organization* and *Imaginization*: They provide a base upon which organizational features can be identified and subsequently summarized in the diagnostic reading, and they provide readers of this study with a contextual base upon which to understand and relate to the schematic diagnostic readings and critical evaluations. Through the organizational contexts developed in Chapter III, organizational characteristics of each study scenario were described, and "a sensitivity for the competing dimensions of a situation" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 428) began to develop.

Therefore, the organizational contexts served as a springboard for developing the diagnostic readings.

A diagnostic reading for each study scenario is developed in this chapter. These readings focus on features linked to the study questions provided to study participants. These questions are presented prior to each diagnostic reading along with the scenario description, which is repeated for the purposes of placing the reading within its particular context. Following Morgan's (1986, 1997a) example, I wrote brief descriptive statements of organizational characteristics from each metaphorical view describing features of the college as understood at the time of the study. The diagnostic readings are presented in a graphic mode. Morgan's urging to keep an open mind is built into the method, because considering the scenario from a variety of angles lessens any myopic tendency.

Next, a critical evaluation storyline was developed for each study scenario. As will be recalled from Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method, the point of view brought to the evaluation guides the development of the storyline. In this study, I chose the point of view of a management consultant because it was a position I held at the time of writing, it is the position taken by Morgan in his examples, and as such it seemed that the model was designed with that type of purpose in mind.

Using Morgan's (1986, 1997a) reflective reading method, diagnostic readings and critical evaluation storylines for the four study scenarios follow.

Reflective Reading for the Collaborative Governance Scenario

As indicated in Chapter III, the scenario provided to study participants was:

> *Collaborative governance principles were adopted by the college in 1991. An exploration of those principles demonstrates that a variety of formal administrative structures and cultures are in place to deal with the complex college milieu. Given this complexity, each distinct structure and culture tends to work well in the realization of certain principles, but not as well for some of the other principles.*

Given their understanding of the collaborative governance principles, participants were asked to consider which formal administrative structures and/or college cultures had helped or hindered their efforts to realize collaborative governance and what practical suggestions they had relative to how college structures and cultures can sustain or advance collaborative governance. The diagnostic reading for the collaborative governance scenario (Figure 3) identified features that helped or hindered collaborative governance.

Diagnostic Reading: Introduction

Reviewing the diagnostic reading, the dominant helping frame appeared to be the organic metaphor. Modeling, negotiating, and collaborating were undertaken to develop a changed internal environment within the college. Most notably, some management forums and ways of providing opportunities to participate in decision making were established by the leadership. The supporting helping frame was the brain metaphor. A commitment to becoming a learning organization and to networked intelligence emerged in the seventh year of collaborative governance experience and was deemed by some study participants as complementary to collaborative governance principles. According to study respondents, some collaborative governance principles encouraged double-loop learning.

The major hindering frame seemed to be the machine metaphor. Given study participants' comments, some collaborative governance principles echoed classical management principles. This subsequently left room to sustain existing patterns of control, authority, and responsibility. In addition, the traditional lines of power and authority seemed to cripple people's ability to act collaboratively. Bureaucratic structure remained intact, and some study participants noted that the structure created bottlenecks insofar as communication was concerned.

The Machine Metaphor

Physical and operational compartmentalization in the College hinder collaborative governance principles related to communication and decision-making.

Hierarchical, bureaucratic structure sustains traditional lines of authority and hinders achievement of the central principle of empowerment.

The Domination Metaphor

Members of the College experienced the irony of leadership insisting that all people work in a collaborative manner.

The Culture Metaphor

Members of the organization lacked shared meaning around key concepts associated with the new political system of collaborative governance.

The Organic Metaphor

This organization is accustomed to competing for perceived finite resources in its "lived in" environments. This exacerbates, but does not entirely obviate, efforts to collaborate.

Collaborative governance was supported by the introduction of forums that encouraged involvement of College membership in decision-making and improved lateral communication. Additional participation in the development of a negotiated College environment could further collaborative governance notions.

The Political Metaphor

The College is an organization with a "changed" political system moving it from classical management principles to collaborative governance principles.

Some traditional power and control bases are threatened by the collaborative governance movement.

The Brain Metaphor

The organization is fragmented into parts and yet is striving ideologically to become a holographic organization, where the whole is built into the parts.

Notions related to becoming a learning organization are being explored.

The Flux and Transformation Metaphor

This organization is in the midst of managing paradox, because it has a traditional mechanistic, bureaucratic structure and operation and at the same time is attempting to adopt organic, team driven collaborative operation.

The Psychic Prison Metaphor

This is an organization "stuck" in "bureaucratized" classical management thinking and control, which collides with precepts of collaborative governance.

Some members interpret new ideas in old ways or deny or avoid change. Deeply held ways of completing work creates anxiety over how time is used.

Figure 3: Diagnostic reading: Collaborative governance scenario (adapted from Morgan, 1997a).

The machine metaphorical frame was a major hindrance to collaborative governance because it represented many views that were contradictory to the organic way of thinking. Collaborative governance tends to stem from an organic view. Because the new political system was organic and the college structure and traditional operating mode were more mechanistic, a disjuncture between structure and operation seemed to result, and subsequently a felt tension seemed to emerge among some members of the college related to the inadequacies of some leadership to walk the talk of collaborative governance.

Additional hindering frames included the culture, political system, and psychic prison metaphors. In relation to the culture metaphor, study participants indicated that the meaning of collaborative governance principles remained ambiguous, and throughout the college there were few shared meanings for the concept. Where there had been shared understanding of college ways and means, respondents noted there was at the time of this study a lack of shared meaning and understanding insofar as the new concepts were concerned, and that seemed to create a more fragile and fragmented culture. With regard to the political system metaphor, participants indicated that some persons within the college perceived the collaborative governance movement as detrimental to their own task and career interests, whether that was in letting go of power or in assuming more power. With these interests challenged, apparently some angst and turbulence emerged for some members of the college. Relative to the psychic prison metaphor, it seemed that deeply held ways of completing one's work tended to get in the way of understanding and working toward changed collaborative governance ways.

Critical Evaluation Storyline for the Collaborative Governance Scenario

Having given thought to possible *hindering frames,* which emerged in the diagnostic reading, I moved on to consider which *helping frames* could be introduced in the development of a possible critical evaluation storyline. It seemed that the flux and transformation metaphor, with its emphasis on managing paradox, might be the type of thought that could facilitate the efforts of college leadership to move toward collaborative governance and away from classical management principles. Next, collaborative governance is itself an organic type of governing system, involving negotiated environments. Hence, I perceived the organic metaphor as a frame that could support a movement toward collaborative governance. Also, I thought that the brain metaphor with its notion of establishing minimum specifications for people to operate within, might provide freedom and creativity in supporting collaborative governance; and the culture metaphor was also identified as a supporting frame because of its focus on creating shared meaning—in this case shared meaning related to collaborative governance. These notions were expanded upon in the Critical Evaluation Storyline for the collaborative governance scenario of this study. That storyline is depicted in Figure 4.

Dominant Frame: The Flux and Transformation Metaphor

Supporting Frames:

The Organic Metaphor	The Brain Metaphor	The Culture Metaphor

Figure 4. Critical evaluation storyline suggesting possible future action for the collaborative governance scenario (adapted from Morgan, 1997a).

Dominant frame: The flux and transformation metaphor. Morgan (1997a) pointed out that "potential new futures *always* create oppositions with the status quo" (p. 292). For almost a decade the college has been involved in working toward a collaborative governance political system. The introduction of collaborative principles into what was reported to be primarily a bureaucratic operation seemed to have created challenge and tension. Some of the organizational problems and contradictions associated with collaborative governance appeared to be ongoing at the time of this study. Assuming that there was still a continuing wish on the part of the organizational leadership and membership to make collaborative governance a lived reality, ways to facilitate the shift from bureaucratic to organic practices were still needed at the time of this study. And, as a result, it seemed to me that methods of managing paradox were required.

The difficulties faced at the college were not unusual. Morgan's (1997a) work provided a related example:

> An organization is seeking to empower its staff by giving employees more control over the decisions influencing their work. This new development, which represents a shift towards a potential new "attractor pattern," encounters opposition from the status quo. Existing decision-making systems and controls, and associated politics of hierarchy and careerism, block or undermine the new developments. Staff struggle to implement the new system. If they are successful in creating a context where they can exercise more autonomy and influence, there is a chance that new forms of empowered decision making will emerge and be accompanied by a transformation of the existing organization. If not, tradition will rule and the "empowerment exercise" will just be added to the organization's list of failed experiments and initiatives. (p. 292)

Morgan (1997a) suggested that the contradictions associated with change need to be managed. Examples of paradox related to the collaborative governance scenario included collaborate but compete, empower but control, and communicate laterally but retain vertical unity of command.

The first step in managing paradox rests in "*recognizing that both dimensions of the contradictions that accompany change usually have merit*" (Morgan, 1997a, pp. 293-294). As Morgan noted, it is unlikely that any organization would want to build exclusively around any "one side of the dimensions presented" (p. 294). Rather, he urged managers to integrate competing elements, such as identifying contexts that are suited to collaboration and others to competition, and establishing when empowerment is appropriate and when formal authority and control are required, and so on. Morgan counseled that "paradox cannot be successfully resolved by eliminating one side" (p. 294) of the contradiction.

The second step in successfully managing paradox is to create new contexts where both sides of the paradox can be positively operationalized "while minimizing the negative dimensions" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 294). An example of managing paradox in this manner is provided under the organic metaphor.

Supporting frame: The organic metaphor. To address some of the contradiction between mechanistic siloed operation and organic collaborative operation, one study respondent introduced an organic notion of developing a participatory, negotiated and adaptable context. The suggestion was to create an empowered environment through a new planning structure made up of cross-representational teams that would bring forward action frameworks to be vetted by appropriate authorities. In this way both dimensions of the paradox could be lived out. Decision making and communication are collaborative, and hence empowering, and at the same time the planning structure is underpinned by agreed-upon levels of authority. In managing paradox, Morgan (1997a) suggested that "the challenge is to find small changes that can unfold in a way that creates large effects" (p. 295). The planning structure might initially be most appropriate in a shifting form, where interdependencies, various college units, and people shift their responsibilities to achieve manageable and specific project work. One paradox that a special planning or project team might address could

be, What are the desirable states of collaborative governance, on the one hand, and of bureaucratic structure and operation, on the other?

Managing paradox in the college could involve changing the rules of the game to accommodate positive aspects of dimensions that seem contradictory. One rule that would be changed, given the notion above, is that the rigid mechanistic classical management principle of *unity of command*, which is based on workers receiving orders from only one superior (Morgan, 1997a, p. 19) could be eased by a political technocratic orientation where "different individuals and groups rise and decline in power along with the value of their technical contributions" (p. 156).

Supporting frame: The brain metaphor. Suggestions for weaving collaborative governance principles into college organization also emanate from learning organization notions. One strategic possibility arising from viewing this organization as a brain is to create a self-organizing space that would have boundaries, as is expanded upon in the following. This would involve minimizing the mechanistic, specific, measurable, and observable college-wide objectives and goals in exchange for establishing minimum specifications. Morgan (1997a) noted:

> This creates interesting paradoxes for management, for how can one manage in a coherent way without setting clear goals and objectives?
>
> The answer derived from cybernetics is that the behavior of intelligent systems requires a sense of the vision, norms, values, limits, or "reference points" that are to guide behavior. Otherwise complete randomness will prevail. But these "reference points" must be defined in a way that creates a space in which many possible actions and behaviors can emerge *including those that can question the limits being imposed!* Targets tend to create strait-jackets. Cybernetic points of reference create space in which learning and innovation can occur. (p. 95)

Minimum specifications should outline "no more than is absolutely necessary to launch a particular initiative or activity on its way" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 114). The thinking behind introducing minimum specifications in place of measurable objectives and goals is that minimum specifications provide a creative and empowered space

within which people can find the best or an imaginative way to achieve the minimum specifications, whereas measurable objectives focus attention on achieving those precise outcomes, and all energies are diverted to those outcomes; as a result, other opportunities for action may be missed.

Supporting frame: The culture metaphor. Create a shared identity. According to respondents' comments, the organization under study launched various initiatives over the last decade without always achieving a shared understanding of the concepts. As the organization's leadership, management, and project teams look back and look forward on the need to create shared meaning, they might consider asking themselves the following questions, which were inspired by the brain and culture metaphorical views:

- Have we thought through the implications and communicated justifiable reasons for introducing the chosen minimum specification reference points?
- Have we provided enough definition of the minimum specification reference points?
- Have we communicated in a language that does not favor one group or division over another?
- Have we provided for a continuing flow of information?

As Morgan (1997a) pointed out, "Culture is not something that can be imposed on a social setting. Rather, it develops during the course of social interaction" (p. 137). What leaders can contribute, however, is a framework and a climate that are conducive to achieving the desired type of culture. The importance of providing this type of leadership was evidenced by Morgan (1997a) when he said:

> Many organizations succeeded in revolutionizing and reinventing themselves through the values of "quality" and "customer service." But, . . . it is estimated that as many as 70 percent of the firms that set off on this new path were unsuccessful, largely because they failed to replace the bureaucratic logic governing the old mode of operation. Their quality and service programs became no more than programs. Despite all the money and effort that was spent,

> they failed to dent the dominant culture and the political dynamic that often supports it. The "reengineering" and "empowerment" movements have encountered a similar experience. To be effective they needed to transform prevailing organizational mind-sets and political patterns. But in the majority of cases, they failed to do so. (pp. 142-143)

Development of a shared culture insofar as organization-wide initiatives are concerned is a project that the college could allocate to special cross-representational teams.

Summary

The organization under study seemed to be in a state of flux and transformation that necessitated the management of paradox insofar as the collaborative governance scenario was concerned. Possibly, a change in organizational structure from traditional hierarchical operation to a team-based operation could accommodate collaborative governance notions. Using collaborative principles to move into a learning organization stance appropriate for the college would seem to require more consideration on the part of college membership. And, last, leadership and college members could consider working toward ensuring that they arrive at shared understanding insofar as organization-wide initiatives are concerned.

Reflective Reading for the Curriculum Task Force Scenario

As was noted in Chapter III, the scenario provided to study participants was,

> *Curriculum can be perceived as a space created for learning. This space, however, is heavily influenced by any number of factors, including institutional culture, administrative structures, and divisional and/or program curricular focus and purpose. Within this complex setting, a task force brought forward recommendations for curriculum in the new millenium to be acted upon by all persons, programs, and divisions across the college.*

Respondents considered the following question: In your experience, how have the college's various administrative structures and cultures impacted on the realization

of Curriculum for the Millenium recommendations, and are there recommendations that you feel will thrive or wither?

Diagnostic Reading: Introduction

The diagnostic reading (Figure 5) that I developed for the curriculum task force scenario identified a number of issues. It appeared that a major *hindering* frame was related to the culture metaphor. The college was made up of many professional subcultures, and given the magnitude and complexity of these cultures, it did not seem possible for members of the task force to represent all realms and dimensions of curriculum for those diverse areas. Although it seemed that the task force recommendations were written as broad guidelines, similar to the minimum specifications notion related to the brain metaphor, it did not seem that people were motivated to create, innovate, learn, or manage their curriculum in the space provided within the reference points. Nor did it seem, from the comments of the participants, that the recommendations sparked any reflective or double-loop thinking. Possibly, the minimum specifications of the recommendations were too broad to be meaningful. An observation that resulted from viewing the college as machine was that the recommendations appeared to be homogenized in an effort to reach consensus among a diverse group of people. Furthermore, from the perspectives of the flux and transformation and psychic prison metaphors, it seemed that the task force may have been trapped in a self-referential, egocentric circle that did not encourage thinking outside of its known boundaries.

These issues emerged as part of developing the diagnostic reading for the curriculum task force scenario. These and additional insights were documented in the diagnostic reading (Figure 5).

The Machine Metaphor

The curriculum is compartmentalized and specialized.

Some learners compartmentalize their learning, which taxes notions of striving for lifelong learning.

In the spirit of striving for bureaucratic "sameness," the task force recommendations were possibly "homogenized" or generalized.

This is a bureaucratic organization familiar with developing relatively specific directions that is not yet comfortable with brain-like minimum specifications that empower people to act within broad organization-wide guidelines.

The Domination Metaphor

This organization is dominated by the provincial government's view of what comprises fundable education and training.

Within career-related programming, working class divisions are perpetuated and persons are implicitly encouraged to adapt to society, rather than constructively criticize and improve on aspects of society. In this sense, people developing curricula are dominated by workplace demands.

The Culture Metaphor

This organization has a fragmented corporate culture because external pressures from the provincial government made it difficult to forge its own curricular culture.

This college is made up of many individualized professional career and academic curricular sub-cultures, that seem to frustrate ability to consider curriculum questions on an organization-wide basis.

An organization whose leadership endorsed the curriculum task force recommendations in varying degrees from passivity to passion.

The Organic Metaphor

This organization prides itself on building links with the communities it serves. But, it is an organization that could improve identification, scanning and creation of its environment.

The Political Metaphor

This organization launched a task force on curriculum that in turn seems to have mobilized and polarized the diverse task and career interests, and control issues within the College. This resulted in reported conflict that was dealt with using formal authority and code language.

The Brain Metaphor

This organization could enhance double-loop thinking, which requires that assumptions be questioned. The task force on curriculum was, however, a vehicle that encouraged double-loop thinking.

The Flux and Transformation Metaphor

The curriculum task force seemed to look into a "mirror" and was perceived as enacting an environment as an extension of its own identity. As a result, the college may possibly be a candidate for becoming an egocentric organization.

The Psychic Prison Metaphor

The college seems to be an organization with preconceived ideas about its environments.

Figure 5. Diagnostic reading: Curriculum task force scenario (adapted from Morgan, 1997a).

Critical Evaluation Storyline for the Curriculum Task Force Scenario

Considering the issues that were highlighted in the diagnostic reading, and giving thought to the critical evaluation storyline (Figure 6) for the curriculum task force scenario, it seemed to me that notions connected with the organic metaphor might assist members of the college in revisiting curricular directions. Hence, the dominant metaphor suggested for the storyline was the college as organism. The major organic concept that came to mind was requisite variety, which suggests that a system needs to "be as diverse as the environment with which it is trying to deal" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 41).

In order to endeavor to be as diverse as an environment, two concepts related to the brain metaphor were recalled. First, traditional methods of scanning and responding to the perceived environment could be continued; and second, more creative methods of imagining possible future environments through double-loop thinking and insight could be introduced. A third notion connected with the brain metaphor also came to mind, and that was the possibility of the college as a whole developing minimum specifications within which people could create their curriculum. Building on this idea of having some common minimum specifications, the cultural notion of creating shared meaning seemed to be a natural extension of the minimum specifications idea. And last, it seemed to me that if the college were going to consider creating new environments, that notions related to the flux and transformation metaphor, in terms of working with concepts related to chaos and complexity, as well as with notions related to mapping influences in an environment, may provide members of the college with ways to envision their environments in innovative ways.

These concepts are explored more fully in the following description (Figure 6) of the critical evaluation storyline for the curriculum task force scenario.

Dominant Frame: **The Organic Metaphor**

Supporting Frames:

The Brain Metaphor	The Culture Metaphor	The Flux and Transformation Metaphor

Figure 6. Critical evaluation storyline: Curriculum task force scenario (adapted from Morgan, 1997a).

Dominant frame: The organic metaphor. The perception I held, based on my observations of the college and comments of study participants, is that members of the college developed recommendations for curriculum based on their professional and academic interests and, coincidentally, their understanding of college environments. Because of the complexity of the organization's environments and, in parallel, the relevant complexity of curriculum, the resulting recommendations seemed to address only some of the conceptions of college environments and some curricular issues.

Based on my reading of the organization under study, it seemed that the task force that considered college-wide curricular issues did not adequately take into account the need to build in as much complexity in the task force environment as there was within the college as a whole. The organic and brain principles of requisite variety could have been used as guides for whether one task force was capable of addressing curricular issues, or whether several project teams were necessary to address the issues. As a next step for the future, possibly a combination of activities could be considered, where, for example, one task force could review the existing curriculum recommendations and determine which could stand as minimum specifications for

curriculum development overall in the college. Then, using those minimum specifications, each particular interest area could create its own curricular spaces, comprised of content, study, and learning experiences unique to each area. As one respondent noted, curriculum is too complex and too big for one task force to deal with at one given moment in time. It seems to me that curriculum revision should be an ongoing process, should be created as close to the involved environment as is possible, and should reflect overall college direction, as outlined in minimum specifications.

When faced with managing plurality of interests on the curriculum task force, both competitive and collaborative modes of interaction seemed to emerge. In some cases, according to respondents' comments, senior management contributed to the text of the recommendations; whereas in other cases, as noted earlier, some generalization of the recommendations occurred in an attempt to "merge insights from people with different perspectives" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 207). Such plurality is a characteristic of postsecondary institutions because they are generally mirrors of society. The impact of plurality on planning activities and ways to work positively with it could be considered in situations where diverse interests come together.

From another point of view, in my perception, the task force project seemed to be caught in an egocentric view of the college's purpose and environments, which may have limited opportunities for its members to imagine themselves outside of their current self-referential circle. At the time of this study, respondents tended to view their environments as entities separate from themselves. They endeavored to respond to their perceived environments. This view of environment, from an organic metaphorical perspective, stems from looking through a population ecology lens and believing that the only way to survive is to compete for a share of limited resources. However, in my view, perhaps it is possible to conceive that the college is made up of, relates to, and can create many environments. If people were to look through an organizational ecology lens, they would recognize that they are part of a larger system; and by collaborating

they can shift, combine, and co-create in the larger environment, possibly embracing a number of subsystems. It seems to me that curriculum emerges from perceptions of its context; that is, its environments.

Given respondents' comments relating to the limitations of the curriculum recommendations, it also seems possible that members of the task force engaged in the activity of outlining curricular activities and directions based on a partial understanding and representation of existing environments. They were charged with looking at curriculum for the millenium and not with exploring possible environments for the early years of 2000. In retrospect, I think, rather than pursuing what the curriculum could be in the new century, perhaps the task force should have taken a step backward and concentrated on what environments the college could identify, participate in, or create in the next century? Hence, the goal would have been to create an Environments of the Future Task Force. Once environments have been identified or created and their tangible characteristics analyzed, it is possible to develop and modify curriculum to fit those environments. As it was, the task force, when mandated to explore curriculum, seemed to do so within the purview of their understanding of environments. This apparently resulted in a rather static view of who and what the college was and where it could create a presence.

The organic metaphor was the dominant directional frame suggested for possible future action because curriculum is always embedded in an environment. Ways to identify and imagine ongoing and new environments for the college seemed to be required, as were abilities to manage this complex organizations in a pluralist manner. In addition, contexts that would allow curriculum to emerge and evolve needed to be envisaged and enacted.

Supporting frame: The brain metaphor. From this perspective, it seemed to me that future action could involve creating intellectual spaces for curricular thought and challenge, where members of the college could identify, anticipate, and conceive of

environments within which curriculum can emerge. To enable the identification of environments, on the one hand, principles of cybernetics, insofar as single-loop thinking is concerned, could be useful to guide curriculum within specified paths. As well, perhaps traditional methods used in identifying environments could be continued, such as identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) or using demographics, to scan, monitor, and sense changes in the existing environments. Using a variety of methods to collect and process information as a result of *observing* existing environments may contribute to members of the college affirming current environments and recognizing changes in existing environments for which curriculum can be developed. These practices place people on the outside, looking at an environment that is external to them.

On the other hand, to enable members of the college to conceive of environments, one of the guidelines for learning organizations which deals with *scanning and anticipating environmental change* (Morgan, 1997a, p. 91) could be drawn upon. Members of the college could go beyond observation and data collection and use insight, creativity, and double-loop thinking to imagine and create appropriate future "maps of reality" (p. 91) with which members of the college may choose to interact. These types of practices place people at the center of the environment which they help to construct.

Within the intellectually analytical and creative spaces devoted to curricular thought, people could continue to identify, work within, scan, anticipate, and construct or create environments in an ongoing manner. On a college-wide level, the cybernetic concept of establishing minimum specifications or points of reference within which the spaces for curricular thought have consensual meaning and direction, as well as working with concepts related to requisite variety, could assist groups in working with the environments closest to their interests and goals.

Supporting frame: The culture metaphor. Building upon the notion of developing college-wide geographic and intellectual curricular reference points and endorsing the need to share ways to identify, monitor, and create environments, opportunities to create shared meaning needed to be developed. One way to do this might have been to establish cross-functional college-wide dialogues on curricular environments and issues. In such dialogues, cultural tensions, such as, "Are we educators or business people?" could be worked through and ambiguous concepts such as a globalized curriculum could be defined.

Supporting frame: The flux and transformation metaphor. As an approach to negotiating and identifying new environments, and hence related curriculum, members of the college might consider combining notions from chaos and complexity theory and mutual causality theory. Chaos and complexity theory suggests that relationships with and among environments are shaped by certain attractor patterns. Management can help to push or forge these patterns by identifying whether or not the forces that lock the organization into its current relationship with the environment are appropriate. If they determine that a change is necessary, then they need to determine ways to establish contexts for the new attractor pattern to develop. Morgan (1997a) said:

> It is important to note that the manager acting on the insights of chaos and complexity theory cannot be in control of the change. He or she cannot define the precise form that the new attractor pattern will take. While it is possible to shape or nurture key elements of the emerging context by opening the old system to new information, new experiences, new modes of service delivery, new criteria for assessing quality, and so on, the resulting "attractor" will find its own form. The important point is that the manager helps to create the conditions under which the new context can emerge. To the extent that the system remains locked into the old context, no significant change is possible. (p. 269)

The creation or promotion of attractor patterns may provide the beginnings of alternative realities and new or changed niches for college curriculum.

In addition, mutual causality mapping may help in recognizing types of attractor patterns and possible implications of pursuing or not pursuing them. The notion behind mutual causality is that change does not occur through simple cause and effect relationships, but rather through a dynamic system made up of positive and negative feedback. Adopting a mind-mapping type of activity to achieve this, people begin mapping by placing an idea in a circle and then proceeding to identify both negative (indicated by dotted lines connecting the circles on the mapping) and positive (solid lines) feedback loops of interaction. Hence, the idea here is to abandon linear thinking for thinking in patterns of loops in order to conceive of some of the complexity within which the college may choose to be implicated. Curriculum is always in a state of flux and transformation, and the college is as its curriculum is. It seems that they are one and the same.

Summary

As a result of undertaking a diagnostic reading and critical evaluation storyline, it seemed to me that curriculum is as complex as the environment it serves. Depending on the point of view, this curriculum may be perceived as concrete and finite, or as something that can be created and lived out. Hence, concepts related to requisite variety, managing pluralism, cybernetics, double-loop thinking, chaos and complexity, and mutual causality could all enter the curricular planning picture for the future.

Requisite variety would address the creation and maintenance of an internal diversity that matches the diversity of the external environment with which one deals. Managing pluralism, due to the diversity of the organization and its environments, becomes important to balance and coordinate multiple interests, and hence environments.

The concepts of cybernetics, related to ensuring that entities operate within bounded realities, are important for members of the college who perceive their

environments as concrete, tangible entities, to which they can react. On the other hand, brain-like double-loop thinking, which encourages reflection and questioning of present states, may open doors that help members of the college conceive of changed, different, or imagined realities that can become lived realities. Additional ways of creating new realities may be achieved by applying some concepts of chaos and complexity and mutual causality.

Reflective Reading for the Summary Mission Statement Scenario

As indicated in Chapter III, the third scenario provided to study participants was as follows:

> *The summary mission statement for the College is, "Lifelong learning, responsive to the community."*
>
> *The phrase is deeply embedded in the consciousness of all staff and is easily and often stated. College staff members' thoughts and actions are greatly influenced by the notion that the college's mission is to "respond" to communities or environments. There are at least two ways that this "responsive" mode can be understood.*
>
> *In the first mode, members of the college respond to an environment made up of opportunities and threats "out there." They makes plans to deal with the situations they discover, and then analyze how successful they were in surviving against the outside world. In the second mode, college members do not think of the community or environment as a domain separate from the college. Rather, they know that their interactions on behalf of the college help to create the very conditions that ultimately shape the community or environment within which they work. They understand that they create conditions so that they evolve as part of and as full participating members of the community or environment.*

The questions considered by study participants were, "In your experience or opinion, how are the 'responsive' modes of connecting with the environment played out at the college, and what impact do they have on college structure and culture? Where, when, why, and how have you experienced or acted in the mode of viewing the community or environment as a separate domain 'out there' to be responded to? On the

other hand, where, when, why, and how have you experienced or acted in the mode of participating in the community or environment because it is 'part of your own world'?"

Diagnostic Reading: Introduction

The diagnostic reading for the mission statement scenario (Figure 7) suggested that a major frame impacting on members of the college may have been the psychic prison metaphor. The mission itself seemed to be a type of psychic prison which tended to encourage narrow perceptions of "community" as something tangible "out there." It also seemed to me, then, that if people perceived an environment out there, they may tend to adopt a dependency mode: They could think that they were dependent on how external forces guided their lives. Furthermore, the mechanistic "patriarchal and hierarchical" organizational structure of the college may have reinforced the dependent mode. From an organic perspective, people may have felt that they had to compete for limited resources out there in the established environment. In terms of the brain metaphor, cybernetic scanning, monitoring and sensing significant environmental aspects would set the boundaries for subsequent responses in terms of curriculum or niches in the postsecondary system. The cultural view seemed to suggest that "being responsive" may have evolved into having dual meaning for some members of the college; it could mean respond to make a profit or respond to meet learning needs. From a flux and transformation view, if members of the college maintained a relatively fixed notion of environments with which to identify, this in turn could hamper abilities to imagine themselves into other domains.

It appeared that the impacts of the mission statement were far-reaching and could potentially limit how the college imagined itself in future years.

Critical Evaluation Storyline for the Mission Statement Scenario

Reflecting on aspects of the diagnostic reading, it seemed to me that members of the college might need a way of breaking away from their psychic prison in order to

The Machine Metaphor

This organization has a history linked to the dependency mode of bureaucracy. That is, the traditional "patriarchal and hierarchical" organization structure, and the funding that until recently was derived primarily from an outside source, the provincial government, has done much to deepen the dependency mode, and this mode is easily projected onto the environment. Members of this organization may feel they can be dependent on how external forces guide their fate.

The Domination Metaphor

For the most part, it seemed that college trends were dominated by marketplace interests.

One implication may be that members of the college embrace a social adaptation point of view insofar as career programming is concerned. That is, they tailor programs, and therefore students, to fit the environment "out there" rather than questioning and working to alter aspects of the environment.

The Culture Metaphor

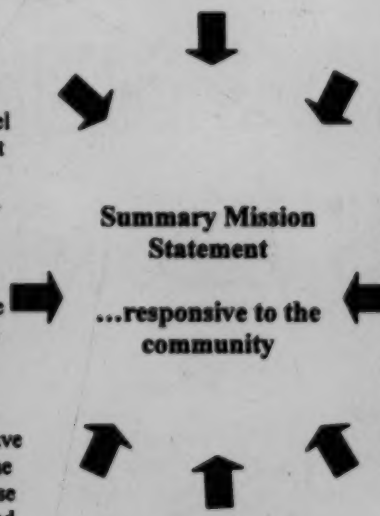
Given the motto, people within the college seem to reflect a pervasive ethos of responding, hence a dependence on environments perceived "out there."

Their motto may possibly have a dual meaning: be responsive to make a profit, or be responsive to meet learning needs. Purpose for "being responsive" lacks clarity; creates potential for splitting the culture into two opposing camps; entrepreneurs and/or educators.

The Organic Metaphor

It seemed that college personnel tended to perceive environment as something that exists "out there" that they can respond to.

Hence, members of the organization were primarily dominated by a "survival of the fittest" view which encourages competition rather than collaboration. Given their environmental stance, college members, in essence, do not have to be directly responsible for the environment "out there" because environment is somehow shaped by forces external to them.



The Political Metaphor

The perception of an environment "out there" may have been humanly comforting because it permits people to observe, fix and sense some feeling of control over their world.

For members of the college, connecting with a specialized environment "out there" may safeguard autonomy over their life space in the College.

The Brain Metaphor

People within the college seem to build on cybernetic, homeostatic thinking. Cybernetics relates to scanning the environment and linking those aspects with operating norms, such as adapting curriculum to marketplace needs; homeostasis refers to maintaining distinctness from, but being in continuous exchange with, the environment out there.

The Flux and Transformation Metaphor

Members of this organization may create a self-producing, somewhat egocentric, identity due to a limited understanding of the role they play in creating environment.

The Psychic Prison Metaphor

The college was an organization with a motto "... responsive to the community" that was itself a psychic prison.

Figure 7. Diagnostic reading: Mission statement scenario (adapted from Morgan, 1997a).

look at themselves and their activities from changed perspectives. Hence, the brain metaphor came to mind as a dominant frame that could possibly help people practice more double-loop thinking and challenge some current assumptions. To support changed thinking, some of the notions from the organic view might be introduced, such as whether there is a place for collaboration within a perceived environment, rather than only competition. Furthermore, based on the indication from study respondents that shared meaning had in the past been difficult to achieve, the culture metaphor came to the fore, and I thought that activities might be launched by people within the college to dialogue and, I hoped, develop some shared meanings about how the college might imagine itself into new futures. However, the political metaphor immediately reminded me that a diversity of interests would still continue and that endeavors to create shared meaning ought not be based on assumptions that there is only one host environment. And, finally, imagining changed futures would place members of the college in states of chaos and complexity. Hence I thought notions related to the flux and transformation metaphor to deal with paradox and plurality could be considered.

These ideas are more fully explored in the critical evaluation storyline (Figure 8) for the mission statement scenario.

Dominant Frame: **The Brain Metaphor**

Supporting Frames:

Organic Metaphor	Culture Metaphor	Political Metaphor	Flux and Transformation Metaphor

Figure 8. Critical evaluation storyline: Mission statement scenario (adapted from Morgan, 1997a).

Dominant frame: The brain metaphor. Members of the college seemed to need ways to reflect upon and take part in developing and enacting activities that would help them evolve as part of a system larger than the system they currently perceived. Rather than acting as an external observer and "responding" to environments "out there," members of the college might begin to think about being an emergent part of an evolving system. They might strengthen their ability for double-loop thinking by reflecting on their perceptions and ways of operating and challenging their own assumptions in their program or department and in their division or administrative area. Appropriate ways to share and communicate information would probably be required as people reflect on their assumptions. Ways of sharing ideas using computer electronic mail or joining dialogue groups, and project teams might be considered. Using brain techniques, a more pervasive cultural ethos may develop. Cybernetics would suggest that people within the college need to work together on identifying reference points and minimum specifications that would create contexts within which intelligence and creativity could emerge but also establish limits in order to avoid any noxious outcomes. When establishing these reference points, redundancy could be built into the organization by using the *ringi* style of circulating many drafts of proposed directions, or reference points, to all members of the college for their involvement and contribution. This might facilitate becoming a holographic organization, because all the parts would continually be folded into the whole.

Most important, however, I chose the brain metaphor as the dominant frame because encouraging people in the college to think about and challenge their current perceptions of environment, and then to create changed socially constructed environments for the college, might be a feasible way to break away from the pervasive psychic prison built on a "responsive to" ideology.

Supporting frame: The organic metaphor. The suggestion from this vantage point was to encourage people to create a broader and more participatory environment

that combines notions of "responsiveness" and the rule of competition with "inclusiveness" and the ethic of collaboration. Members of the college might work together to determine when competitiveness or collaboration are advantageous or appropriate.

Supporting frame: The culture metaphor. From this perspective, it seemed that members of the college could consider developing a listening and dialogue space. In the process of re-imagining the organization as part of a larger system, people could work together to develop reference points and directions. This working together could enhance shared understanding and strengthen culture.

Supporting frame: The political metaphor. Recalling the diverse interests that emerged when curriculum was considered by a task force, I thought it would be important to honor the diversity of interests and not assume that there is only one host environment.

Supporting frame: The flux and transformation metaphor. This perspective taught me that conflict can be expected when people work through new identities and activities. Therefore, it seemed that management would need to deal with complex and paradoxical circumstances. One method that could be considered from the flux and transformation metaphor relates to dialectical analysis. This concept involves identifying where contradictions are likely to manifest themselves in a system and then developing plans to deal with or eliminate their impacts.

Summary

Most, but not all, respondents who addressed this scenario indicated that their environments were "out there." Possibly this notion stemmed from a long-standing mission statement suggesting that people *respond to* the college's community, inferring there was something tangible to which to respond. In an effort to assist people in re-imagining their community, or environment, the brain metaphor was suggested as a

frame that might encourage reflective and creative thinking. In addition, notions related to the organism, culture, political, and flux and transformation metaphors were also brought forward to suggest points of view that might assist members of the college in rethinking their future.

Reflective Reading for the Task Force Process Scenario

As noted in Chapter III, the fourth study scenario provided to study participants was:

> *In the past decade, the college used task forces to consider two areas:*
> - *governance; and*
> - *curriculum for the millenium.*
>
> *An aspect of task forces is that they create attention, interpretation and recommendations that impact on an organization's operation. By virtue of their mandate, size and composition, and because they focus only on some aspects of highly complex situations task forces may be limited in their ability to identify all possible directions that could benefit the college.*

The question posed for this scenario was, "To what extent do task force processes and outcomes contribute to meaningful change in the college?"

Diagnostic Reading: Introduction

The diagnostic reading seemed to suggest that notions related to the brain and organic metaphors were supported by task force process (Figure 9). Insofar as the brain metaphor was concerned, the task force process supported double-loop thinking and the development of a holographic organization, and assisted in improving communication. From an organic perspective, the process supported collaborative governance principles and provided a channel through which ego and self-actualization needs might be met for members of the task force. The political metaphor seemed to be represented in different ways in each task force. In one task force the process seemed to strengthen a common interest area, and in another it seemed to emphasize the different interest areas. Overall, however, the task force process is democratic. From a machine perspective, however,

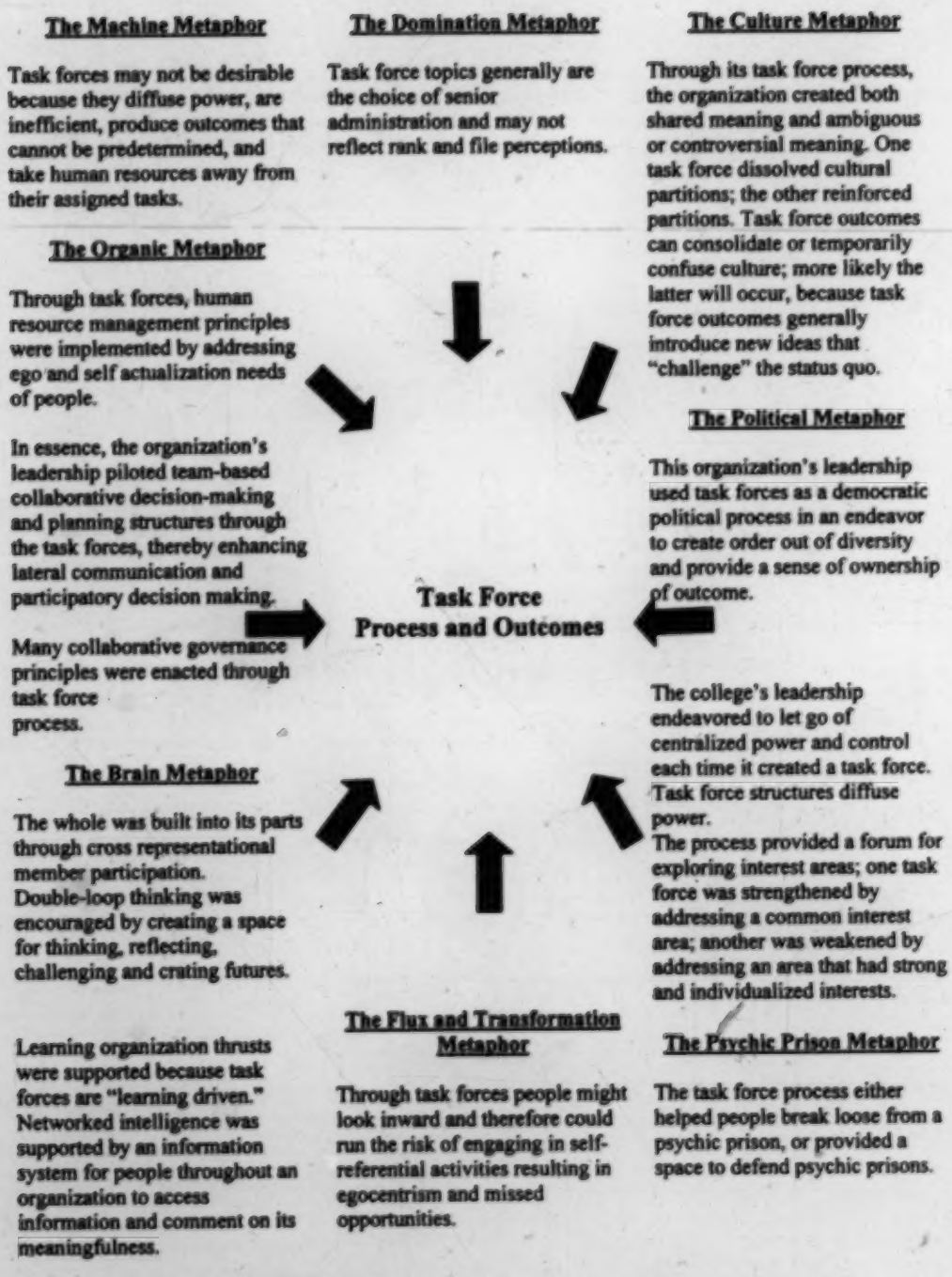

The Machine Metaphor
Task forces may not be desirable because they diffuse power, are inefficient, produce outcomes that cannot be predetermined, and take human resources away from their assigned tasks.
The Domination Metaphor
Task force topics generally are the choice of senior administration and may not reflect rank and file perceptions.
The Culture Metaphor
Through its task force process, the organization created both shared meaning and ambiguous or controversial meaning. One task force dissolved cultural partitions; the other reinforced partitions. Task force outcomes can consolidate or temporarily confuse culture; more likely the latter will occur, because task force outcomes generally introduce new ideas that "challenge" the status quo.
The Organic Metaphor
Through task forces, human resource management principles were implemented by addressing ego and self actualization needs of people.
In essence, the organization's leadership piloted team-based collaborative decision-making and planning structures through the task forces, thereby enhancing lateral communication and participatory decision making.
Many collaborative governance principles were enacted through task force process.
The Political Metaphor
This organization's leadership used task forces as a democratic political process in an endeavor to create order out of diversity and provide a sense of ownership of outcome.
Task Force Process and Outcomes
The college's leadership endeavored to let go of centralized power and control each time it created a task force. Task force structures diffuse power.
The process provided a forum for exploring interest areas; one task force was strengthened by addressing a common interest area; another was weakened by addressing an area that had strong and individualized interests.
The Brain Metaphor
The whole was built into its parts through cross representational member participation.
Double-loop thinking was encouraged by creating a space for thinking, reflecting, challenging and crating futures.
Learning organization thrusts were supported because task forces are "learning driven."
Networked intelligence was supported by an information system for people throughout an organization to access information and comment on its meaningfulness.
The Flux and Transformation Metaphor
Through task forces people might look inward and therefore could run the risk of engaging in self-referential activities resulting in egocentrism and missed opportunities.
The Psychic Prison Metaphor
The task force process either helped people break loose from a psychic prison, or provided a space to defend psychic prisons.

Figure 9. Diagnostic reading: Task force process and outcome scenario (adapted from Morgan, 1997a).

democracy may not be the system of choice. Similarly, task force process may be viewed as positive or negative from a psychic prison and culture perspective. In some cases, people may break free of psychic prisons as a result of serving on a task force, whereas in other cases people may move more deeply into their psychic prisons if it seems to them that their convictions are being challenged. In some cases, shared meaning is created and strengthened, whereas in others, shared meaning is diffused.

Critical Evaluation Storyline for the Task Force Process Scenario

Given that the task forces appeared to support collaborative governance principles, it seemed to me that the process could be continued as an ongoing "statement" of commitment to collaborative planning. Second, as a result of the difficulties that seemed to arise through the curriculum task force, where the task force mandate was to address an area that affected many diverse interest areas, the political metaphor view might suggest that task force process be used to address matters that have a common interest base and where people perceive changes in current practice would be beneficial to them. Furthermore, from a flux and transformation metaphor perspective, task forces may result in chaos and highlight complexity; hence leaders may need to manage pluralism and paradox. From a brain perspective, task forces seem to contribute to learning organization notions, such as building the parts into the whole. And, finally, task force process, from a culture point of view, may bring groups together, or may serve to separate them further.

These notions are more fully explained in the following critical evaluation storyline and depicted in Figure 10.

Dominant Frame: The Organic Metaphor

Supporting Frames:

The Political Metaphor	The Flux and Transformation Metaphor	The Brain Metaphor	The Culture Metaphor

Figure 10. Critical evaluation storyline: Task force scenario (adapted from Morgan, 1997a).

Dominant frame: The organic metaphor. The task force process could be considered as a stepping stone to introducing a team and project-based collaborative planning structure to replace the mechanistic structure. Reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the previous task forces might provide insight into how project teams could work within the college. Task forces and matrix structures harmonize with the collaborative governance principles, and hence structure and operation would be congruent.

Supporting frame: The political metaphor. Task forces should be considered when there are issues that can be addressed commonly on a college-wide basis. For example, the collaborative governance task force shaped a political system that could be implemented by all people within the college and addressed an area where there were some common concerns. The outcome of that task force was seen as positive by the majority of college members. The curriculum task force was successful in establishing some broad reference points within which people *could*, but may have chosen not to, work with their own unique curriculum; however, arriving at those points was charged with dialogue related to diverse task and career interests. As was suggested earlier in this dissertation, when there are a variety of interest areas, then a variety of project teams, or mini task forces, could be established to address given questions. Task forces

were perceived by some study respondents as a means to developing college-wide direction and as a way to amalgamate contradictory views.

Supporting frame: The flux and transformation metaphor. When task forces, or project teams, are established, then management and/or task force members need to be able to manage pluralism and paradox.

Supporting frame: The brain metaphor. Task forces have many brain-like qualities, and using them or similar processes will strengthen the college's capacity for becoming a learning organization. In terms of communicating ideas, "task force" dialogue might take place using technology rather than in-person meetings, or perhaps a combination of the two.

Supporting frame: The culture metaphor. Code languages should be avoided as much as possible so that no group is "favored" by recommendation wording and presentation. Task forces or project team work can help people break down barriers among their subcultures.

Summary

Two task forces were established, and each had a different and unique contribution to the college. The analysis undertaken in this study suggests that task force *process* has more positive than negative impacts on an organization's culture and structure and that task force *outcomes* emerge and evolve; therefore, the possible benefits of outcomes are not something that can be predicted or assured prior to their actual becoming.

Commentary

In the foregoing, diagnostic readings and critical evaluations were undertaken for the four scenarios used in this study. These perceptions and directions are the result of my thinking and reflection with regard to aspects that created certain situations and areas that might be worth consideration regarding future directions. They are therefore a

representation of how I perceived the present and a possible future for the college. They were, due to the generosity and academic interest of members of the college, placed within a "real-life" context that provided me with a place to learn from others and to practice using Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical analysis method.

The first two scenarios, on collaborative governance and curriculum, focused on *outcomes* of task forces, hence on *initiatives* that had been introduced to the college over the past decade. What was not apparent to me prior to the development of the critical evaluations was that these areas would involve the same grouping of organizational views in their storylines to augment what I perceived would be a desirable future direction. The metaphorical views for both scenario storylines included organic, brain, culture, and flux and transformation metaphors. To me, these areas are "growth" areas; and, again in reflection, these directional streams appear to fit with the growth and initiative modes.

The third scenario, dealing with the mission statement of being *responsive to the community*, was an example of an ideology that had significantly pervaded college thinking about who and what they were and could be in the future. Again, the growth metaphors of brain, organism, culture, and flux and transformation were represented in the possible future action. However the political frame was added because mission will affect personal and professional interests of the college membership.

And finally, the fourth scenario dealt with a *process.* Here organic, political, flux and transformation, brains, and culture emerged as possible directional areas.

For the near future, then, this analysis suggests overall that the college could focus on brains, as they were doing in relation to their interest in becoming a learning organization. Furthermore, flux and transformation views would be an important organizational thrust because of the changes that the college is experiencing and will continue to experience. Shared meaning, cultural view, is a binding factor, and one that is important because of the changes that have an impact on college operation. Last, an

overall organic versus a mechanistic view will help more people within the college participate in its evolution.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an outline of Morgan's (1986, 1997a) reflective reading method, which involves diagnostic readings and critical evaluations. Also outlined were the steps I undertook in this thesis to apply Morgan's method. A diagnostic reading highlighting features of the college at the time of the study, and a critical evaluation storyline suggesting possible future activities were developed for each of the four study scenarios. This was followed by a commentary outlining the points of view that emerged as a result of the reflective readings.

In the next chapter, Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of organizational analysis is further examined in relation to its linkages with paradigms, its use of metaphors for organizational analysis, and my experience using the model.

CHAPTER V

METAPHORS AND PARADIGMS

Morgan's (1986, 1997a) eight metaphorical views of organization taken together provide a method of organizational analysis that can help its users gain new and more comprehensive perspectives on organizations. In the first part of this dissertation, the metaphorical views served as a heuristic springboard to seeking enhanced understanding and to establishing possible action plans based on complementary and competing insights concerning the organization under study. Hence, the metaphorical method of analysis seemed to serve its design purpose, which was to offer a way to "read" organizations and develop an appreciation for their complexity.

This second part of the study explores the metaphors themselves in search of an understanding of their underlying foundations, for the diagnostic readings that emerged through the organizational analysis suggested a type of organizational profile, and that profile rests on foundations made up of assumptions that have not yet been explored. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) alluded to this notion when they said:

> Living a human life is a philosophical endeavor. Every thought we have, every decision we make, and every act we perform is based upon philosophical assumptions so numerous we couldn't possibly list them all. We go around armed with a host of presuppositions about what is real, what counts as knowledge, how the mind works, who we are, and how we should act. (p. 9)

While the method of organizational analysis offers a way to "read" organizations, a further examination of the foundations of the metaphorical images of organization may contribute to understanding organizational world views. This next part of the planned journey through the metaphorical organizational analysis was guided by an earlier work of Morgan's, which was Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*, and addressed research question 3.

This chapter provides an introduction to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) paradigms. An attempt was made to identify paradigm-metaphor relationships, based on Burrell and Morgan's paradigms and Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical *Images of Organization*. Then, using the devised paradigm-metaphor relationship framework, the diagnostic readings developed in Chapter IV were revisited to explore which world views might have been dominant at the college at the time of this study's readings, and whether the suggested future storylines maintained, shifted, or expanded world views. In many ways this second part of the dissertation experiments with the organizational analysis method to see if an extension of understanding to the level of world views might be helpful to people who contribute to the social constructions of organizations.

An Introduction to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) Sociological Paradigms

Burrell and Morgan (1979) identified four broad sociological paradigms, or world views, based on "different sets of metatheoretical assumptions, about the nature of science, the subjective-objective dimension, and the nature of society, the dimension of regulation-radical change" (Morgan, 1980, p. 607). The four paradigms were descriptively named *functionalist*, *interpretive*, *radical humanist*, and *radical structuralist*. In the Burrell and Morgan model, paradigms, or world views, emerge and evolve based on a sharing of assumptions that guide understanding and conceptions of the world. Within those paradigms may be alternative and what might seem to be different perspectives; however, all shared paradigmatic perspectives would be deemed to stem from similar assumptions. To assist in putting this in context, Morgan is drawn upon; he suggested that paradigms were "alternative realities" (p. 606) and that within paradigms could be several metaphors, based on particular "schools of thought" (p. 606). Within the metaphors could be many "puzzle solving activities based on specific tools and texts" (p. 606). In *Images of Organization*, for example, Morgan (1986, 1997a) introduced metaphors and puzzle-solving activities (theories). However,

in order to begin to understand which metaphors share similar views of the world, and hence are associated with a paradigm, a look back at the earlier work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) is required. A brief sketch of those paradigms follows.

Within the functionalist paradigm, legitimate organizational structures need to be effective, efficient, and focussed on controlling performance. As Morgan (1990) noted, types of "breakdown in the control of ordered activity" (p. 16) represent problems in the functionalist paradigm. Within the interpretivist paradigm, organization is viewed as a social construction, and "the interpretive theorist's problematic is to understand the meaning and significance of this web of relationships, and how it exists as such" (p. 19). Radical humanists identify social constructions that limit people from living out their natural humanness. For example, capitalism would be an issue addressed by radical humanists. Radical structuralist perspectives focus on "self-generated change" (p. 24) and on how organizations play a role "in the total social formation in which they are set" (p. 25). Additional characteristics of the paradigms are shown in Figure 11.

The functionalist and radical structuralist views of the world assume that reality is tangible and out there, whereas the interpretivist and radical humanist views consider reality as a social construction. The functionalist and interpretivist views adopt the stance that society can be understood in terms of regulation, which, according to Burrell and Morgan (1979), means that the primary concern is "to provide explanations of society in terms which emphasize its underlying unity and cohesiveness" (p. 17). The radical humanist and radical structuralist, on the other hand, are interested in finding "explanations for the radical change, deep-seated structural conflict, modes of domination and structural contradiction" (p. 17) in society. Given this introduction to the four paradigms, in the following, relationships among metaphorical views and the different paradigms are reviewed.

Radical Humanist	Radical Structuralist
• "Defined by its concern to develop a *sociology of radical change* from a *subjectivist* standpoint" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 32); • "Has much in common with that of the interpretive paradigm; . . . however, its frame of reference is committed to a view of society which emphasizes the importance of overthrowing or transcending the limitations of existing social arrangements" (p. 32); • "One of the most basic notions underlying the whole of this paradigm is that the consciousness of man is dominated by the ideological superstructures with which he interacts, and that these drive a cognitive wedge between himself and his true consciousness" (p. 32).	• "Theorists located within this paradigm advocate a *sociology of radical change* from an *objectivist* standpoint" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 33); • "Radical structuralists concentrate upon structural relationships within a realist social world. They emphasize the fact that radical change is built into the very nature and structure of contemporary society, and they seek to provide explanations of the basic interrelationships with the context of total social formations" (p. 34); • "Common to all theorists is the view that contemporary society is characterized by fundamental conflicts which generate radical change through political and economic crises" (p. 34).
Interpretive	**Functionalist**
• "Approach consonant with the tenets of what we have described as the *sociology of regulation*, though its *subjectivist* approach to the analysis of the social world makes its links with this sociology often implicit rather than explicit" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 28); • "Informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. It seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action" (p. 28); • "Ontological status of the social world is viewed as extremely questionable and problematic" (p. 32); • "Interpretive philosophers and sociologists seek to understand the very basis and source of social reality" (p. 31).	• "Dominant framework for the conduct of academic sociology and the study of organizations" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 25); • "Firmly rooted in the *sociology of regulation* and approaches its subject matter from an *objectivist* point of view" (p. 25); • "The use of mechanical and biological analogies as a means of modelling and understanding the social world is particularly favored in many functionalist theories" (p. 26).

Figure 11. Burrell and Morgan's (1979) sociological paradigms based on underlying assumptions about social science and the nature of society.

Paradigm-Metaphor Relationships

In an earlier paper, and prior to *Images of Organization*, Morgan (1980, p. 608) suggested that machines, organisms, brains, cultures and political systems metaphors *could* be framed within the functionalist paradigm *if* "based upon the assumption that the reality of organizational life rests in a network of ontologically real relationships, which are relatively ordered and cohesive" (p. 616). Considering this lead and the mechanistic and organic stance of real worlds "out there" characterized by an "underlying unity and cohesiveness," it seems reasonable to accept that the organization-as-machine and organism metaphors, as presented in *Images of Organization* (Morgan, 1986, 1997a) fall within the functionalist paradigm. In addition, the brain metaphor, as it is developed in *Images of Organization*, seems also to be within the functionalist paradigm because of its mechanistic and organic underpinnings such as cybernetics, which "encourages theorists to view organizations as patterns of information, and focuses attention upon the way in which states of homeostatic balance can be sustained through learning processes based on negative feedback" (Morgan, 1980, p. 615). In addition, the principles of holographic design presented in the brain metaphor reflect machine and organic characteristics, such as corporate DNA, wherein "it is possible to encode key elements of a 'complete organization' in the cultural and other codes that unite its members" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 102); and networked intelligence, where it is possible to build "the whole" into "the parts" "through the design of appropriate information systems" and holographic structure, where it is possible to design "organizational structures that can grow large while staying small" (p. 104). Furthermore, the brain metaphor calls upon notions related to the redundancy "of parts" which is a mechanistic characteristic where parts are designed to perform specific functions (p. 111); and requisite variety, which calls for control systems to "be as varied and complex as the environment being controlled" (p. 112), which is an

organic, and cybernetic, idea that internal systems must be as diverse as the external environment with which they deal. The notion of "minimum specs," which "suggests that managers should define no more than is absolutely necessary to launch a particular initiative" (p. 114) is necessary to "avoid the anarchy and the completely free flow that arises when there are no parameters or guidelines" (p. 114), which ensures maintenance of order and control. These types of representations found within the brain metaphor seem to support characterizing it with a functionalist world view.

The cultural and political metaphors, however, as presented in *Images of Organization* (1986, 1997a) seem to share assumptions found within the interpretivist paradigm. I suggest this because they focus on "the way in which organizational realities are created and sustained" (Morgan, 1980, p. 616) cognitively by an organization's members. For example, parallels seem to arise among the cultural and political metaphors and a language game metaphor. Morgan referred to a language game as an interpretivist metaphor as follows:

> The metaphor of a language game (Wittgenstein, 1968; as cited in Morgan, 1980), for example, denies organizations concrete ontological status and presents organizational activity as little more than a game of words, thoughts, and actions. It suggests that organizational realities emerge as rule-governed, symbolic structures as individuals engage their worlds through the use of specific codes and practices, in order to vest their situations with meaningful form (p. 616).

Morgan (1980) also suggested that "metaphors of accomplishment (Garfinkel, 1967) and enacted sense making (Weick, 1977)" (p. 617) were interpretivist metaphors, which seems to relate to cultural and political metaphors because, in Morgan's words,

> Garfinkel's ethnomethodology focuses upon the way in which human beings accomplish and sustain social situations intelligible both to themselves and to others. Weick's sense making metaphor develops related insights, emphasizing how realities are enacted by individuals through after-the-event rationalizations as to what has been happening. Viewed in terms of these metaphors, organizational realities are to be seen as ongoing social constructions, emerging

> from the skillful accomplishments through which organizational members impose themselves upon their world to create meaningful and sensible structure. Like other interpretive metaphors, they emphasize that the routine, taken-for-granted aspects of organizational life are far less concrete and real than they appear. (p. 617)

Again, in Morgan's (1980) paper, *Paradigms, Metaphors, and Puzzle Solving in Organization Theory,* he noted that the psychic prison metaphor could be understood in terms of the radical humanist paradigm (p. 608) The perspective he broached related to "individuals being viewed as captives of unconscious processes" (p. 618), and in both editions of *Images of Organization* (Morgan, 1986, 1997a), he presented the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Jung. However, Morgan did not explore psychic prisons from a critical theorist point of view, which would place emphasis "upon the process of reification through which individuals over-concretize their world, perceiving it as objective and real, and something independent of their own will and action" (p. 617) wherein they "are effectively viewed as prisoners of a mode of consciousness which is shaped and controlled through ideological processes" (p. 618). As a case in point, Morgan (1980) suggested that "the contemporary radical humanist critique focuses upon the alienating aspects of various modes of thought and action which characterize life in industrial societies" (p. 609). For example, he referred to capitalism as a topic of concern for theorists in the radical humanist paradigm, because of its totalitarian potential in that it can mold "the nature of work, technology, rationality, logic, science, roles, language and mystifying ideological concepts such as scarcity, leisure, and so on" (p. 609). In *Images of Organization*, however, Morgan (1986, 1997a) does not explore radical humanist "anti organization" thrusts related to alienating ideologies. He confirmed this as follows:

> My original aim in writing this chapter [psychic prison metaphor] was to explore two aspects of the psychic prison: one associated with the unconscious and the other with the role of ideology. However, the problem of making the chapter a manageable one has led me to focus on the former. The issue of ideology is thus not given the attention it truly deserves. Indeed, a strong case can be made for

> the idea that the metaphor of "organization as ideology" should be developed in its own right. (Morgan, 1997a, p. 406)

Morgan (1980) noted that radical humanists focus on how people can transcend their own and socially constructed alienation through "thought and action (praxis)" (p. 609).

Morgan (1980) suggested that the instruments of domination metaphor stemmed from a radical structuralist view, and I would also place the flux and transformation metaphor in this paradigm. As he explained, radical structuralists, like radical humanists, view society "as a potentially dominating force" (p. 609); however, rather than considering ideologies as creations made and sustained by people, radical structuralists tend to share a functionalist view of reality as something "defined by hard, concrete, ontologically real structures" (p. 609). Morgan (1990) continued to say that "organizations, from this point of view, are empirical facets of an underlying mode of social organization, and their nature and significance can only be understood in terms of the role they play within the whole" (p. 25). In relation to the perspective of organizations as instruments of domination, analyses of bureaucracies, for example, as oppressive and dominating, are a problematic addressed by radical structuralists. In relation to flux and transformation perspectives, "direct consequence of original action" (p. 24) is a problematic addressed to reach an understanding of the role that organizations play in their own, and in the whole of the social world's, creation and transformation. Nevertheless, these worlds "are amenable to empirical observation" (p. 25). Again, Morgan (1980) suggested that radical structuralists wish to transcend domination and understand deep structures of organization by placing emphasis on "the importance of praxis" (p. 609). This praxis, however, differs from the radical humanists' in that it treats tension and contradiction as concrete, existing, and opposing elements outside themselves against which they must work to change; whereas radical

humanists believe that systems are conceived and sustained within the human psyche and need to be worked on from inside.

Based on Morgan's (1986, 1997a) writings and given my view of metaphor and paradigm relationships, the machine, organism, and brain metaphors as presented in *Images of Organization* appear to be rooted in the functionalist paradigm; the culture and political system metaphors in the interpretive paradigm; psychic prison in the radical humanist; and the flux and transformation, and instruments of domination metaphors in the radical structuralist paradigm. This review, then, would suggest the following (Figure 12) paradigm-metaphor relationships.

Radical Humanist	**Radical Structuralist**
Psychic prison	Flux and transformation Instrument of domination
Interpretivist	**Functionalist**
Culture Political system	Machine Organism Brain

Figure 12. Paradigm-metaphor relationships.

As Morgan explained in 1980, "Each of these four paradigms defines the grounds of opposing modes of social analysis and has radically different implications for the study of organization" (p. 609). The paradigms are based on ontological assumptions that personally experienced worlds are something external to themselves and concrete, as in the functionalist and radical structuralist paradigms, or as something that forms and is sustained within cognition, as in the interpretive and radical humanist

paradigms. Epistemologically, the functionalist and radical structuralist paradigms assume that knowledge is certain and authoritative, whereas the interpretivist and radical humanist paradigms assume that knowledge is diverse, uncertain, and possibly contradictory (Morgan, 1983, p. 383).

Burrell and Morgan (1979) developed the four paradigms as a result of recognizing a coherence and distinctiveness among positions taken by various organizational theorists. In their work, they argued that whereas certain theorists may appear to present differing points of view, "they often adopt identical postures in relation to their view of the social world" (p. 401). At the time, Burrell and Morgan established that the majority of modern organizational theory was based on functionalist views, and fewer theories were based on assumptions found in the remaining three paradigms. In their concluding comments, Burrell and Morgan observed:

> Our journey through social theory has given a glimpse of its complexity and diversity, and has revealed the relatively narrow piece of ground which organization theorists, along with many other groups of social scientists, have thus far tilled. It has become clear that the foundations of the subject are extremely narrow, and that for the most part organization theorists are not always entirely aware of the traditions to which they belong. (p. 401)

Morgan (1980) echoed these thoughts when he said:

> Orthodoxy in organization theory has developed upon the basis of metaphors which reflect the assumptions of the functionalist paradigm. These assumptions are rarely made explicit and are often not appreciated, with the consequence that theorizing develops upon unquestioned grounds. The assumptions of interpretive, radical humanist, and radical structuralist paradigms challenge functionalist assumptions in fundamental ways. (p. 619)

However, based on this preliminary analysis, it appears that through *Images of Organization*, Morgan (1986, 1997a) has invited people to understand organizations from different paradigmatic stances. He noted the importance of understanding paradigm-metaphor relationships as follows:

> By appreciating how specific puzzle-solving activities are linked to favored metaphors, which are in accord with a favored view of reality, the theorist can become much more aware of the role which he or she plays in relation to the social construction of scientific knowledge. (Morgan, 1980, p. 607)

And for that reason, an examination of predominant paradigmatic views may at least open a dialogue on what views of the world people consciously wish to support.

An interpretation of possible college paradigms follows, in anticipation of acquiring some insight into the foundation assumptions of the organization and into the researcher's interpretation of which world views might support the college in its future endeavors.

College Paradigms

Looking back at the diagnostic readings presented in Chapter 4, consideration is given to where the college may have stood in relation to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four paradigms at the time of this study and whether the storylines suggested changes in any paradigmatic stances.

Scenario 1: Collaborative Governance

Insofar as the organization under study was "read" and diagnosed by the researcher, based on respondents' comments related to the collaborative governance scenario, the organism metaphor appears to be dominant and the brain metaphor supportive in furthering the cause of introducing collaborative governance. On the other hand, stances related to machine, culture, political system, and psychic prison perspectives also seem apparent, but were deemed by the researcher, based on respondents' comments, to be hindrances to achieving a changed mode of governance from classical management to collaborative governance. This seems to suggest that insofar as respondents' comments were interpreted, two functionalist metaphors, organism and brain, were active in attempting to support collaborative governance; whereas two interpretivist metaphors, culture and political system, and one radical

humanist metaphor, psychic prison, hindered endeavors to realize collaborative governance.

Looking back at the critical evaluation storyline which outlined possible future action, a shift to the radical structuralist paradigm was suggested insofar as the dominant frame was concerned. The researcher's idea was that a move to flux and transformation perspectives might assist leaders of the college in managing paradox as members worked through the transformation from a mechanistic to an organic mode of governance, and in addition might help members identify their own roles in the college's own creation and transformation. In addition, it seemed to the researcher that perspectives related to the functionalist brain and interpretive culture metaphors might be potentially supportive. The paradigm locus at the time of the study and in relation to the proposed future storyline are shown in Figure 13.

Time of Study		**Proposed Future Storyline**	
Radical humanist	**Radical structuralist**	**Radical humanist**	**Radical structuralist** Flux and transformation
Interpretivist	**Functionalist** Organism Brain	**Interpretivist** Culture	**Functionalist** Brain

Figure 13. Comparison of world views related to the collaborative governance scenario.

At the time that the study was conducted, respondents' comments led to the possibility that members of the college were attempting to introduce collaborative governance principles using only functionalist world views. The storyline for the future,

proposed by the researcher, suggested that a flux and transformation metaphor might be appropriate in supporting a transition from one mode of governance to another.

Given this analysis of paradigmatic stances, it appears that the college was tackling change from functionalist views that primarily uphold concepts that a reality exists "out there," and society is underpinned by unity and cohesiveness. The functionalist world view does not consider the possibilities that people construct their realities, as might be found in a culture metaphor of organization, or that leaders may have to manage paradox during times of change, as is considered in the flux and transformation metaphor. In both instances, however, the functionalist view using the brain metaphor school of thought related to building the whole into the parts and related to guiding operation within specified parameters appears to augment the change from one mode of governance to another.

Scenario 2: Curriculum Task Force

The diagnostic reading for Scenario 2 shed light on tensions and concerns described by study participants. It appears from this reading that the work of the curriculum task force at the time of this study was supported by views related to the functionalist brain metaphor and held back to varying extents by views associated with all other metaphorical perspectives: in the functionalist paradigm, by views belonging to machine and organic theories; in the interpretive frame, by views associated with culture and political frames; in the radical humanist frame, by psychic prisons; and in the radical structuralist, by flux and transformation and instruments of domination. This task force seems to have dealt not only with varying perspectives within a major paradigm, but also with competing assumptions from all four paradigms.

Possible future action, suggested by the researcher in the critical evaluation storyline, centered on two functionalist perspectives: the organism metaphor as the dominant frame, the brain metaphor as a supporting frame, and the interpretivist culture

metaphor as a second supporting frame. In addition, the radical structuralist flux and transformation frame was considered a potential support in working through the multiple realities of curriculum. In this recommended storyline, then, members of the college could maintain the functionalist assumption of an objective reality, could recognize the social construction of curriculum, and could deal with chaos and complexity through radical structuralist social analysis.

Time of Study		**Proposed Future Storyline**	
Radical humanist	**Radical structuralist**	**Radical humanist**	**Radical structuralist** Flux and transformation
Interpretivist	**Functionalist** Brain	**Interpretivist** Culture	**Functionalist** Organism Brain

Figure 14. Comparison of world views related to the curriculum task force scenario.

Again, the dominant paradigm at the time of the study was functionalist, which possibly meant that some of the activities undertaken by college members on behalf of the curriculum task force had not adequately considered the implications of change and of unique and personal curricular cultures. And, again, given the complexity of the situation, the researcher's storyline suggested a mix of paradigmatic views from functionalist to interpretivist to radical structuralist. The organic, brains, and flux and transformation metaphors, however, seem to suggest that reality is indeed perceived as "out there" and as something that can be empirically studied and reacted to. Hence, all in all, the main world view message for the future is one of being able to perceive a reality as something concrete, of being able to engage in activities that could enhance

shared meaning around curricular directions and issues, and of being able to find ways to evolve along with the system "out there."

Scenario 3: Mission Statement

The mission scenario, which asked an ontological question concerning whether the college's community was out there in a tangible sense or whether it was created by the actions of people on behalf of the college, was impacted by all eight metaphorical views and, again, by all paradigms. Looking at the diagnostic reading, the dominant impacting frame at the time of the study, however, was identified as a radical humanist psychic prison, because the mission was considered in this analysis as a synthetic and pervasive ideology that constrained and channeled college activity into a responsive mode.

The critical evaluation storyline presented in this dissertation focussed on the brains metaphor as the dominant frame for future action because of the potential for reflection and creativity in relation to evolving as part of a system, and to counter the pervasive existing psychic prison perspectives. Again, supporting frames included functionalist organism, interpretivist culture and political system views, as well as the radical structuralist flux and transformation view. In relation to college mission, then, the suggested storyline would encourage members of the college to think themselves into a changed future, and that transformation could be mediated by notions from the radical structuralist flux and transformation metaphor.

Although it might be possible to think of the main paradigm for the mission statement as functionalist, due to its focus on being responsiveness to a community that is somehow concrete, in the diagnostic reading the dominant metaphor that emerged, based on respondents' comments and this researcher's interpretation, was the radical humanist psychic prison. The suggestion was that the motto mission statement itself was a type of socially constructed psychic prison that may stand in the way of college

members conceiving of any other views of the world. Once again, a trio of paradigms emerged as part of the future's storyline. These stances indicate a propensity to view reality in a concrete, more objective fashion, while recognizing that the reality may well have been spawned by people creating meaning and taking actions.

Time of Study		Proposed Future Storyline	
Radical humanist Psychic prison	**Radical structuralist**	**Radical humanist**	**Radical structuralist** Flux and transformation
Interpretivist	**Functionalist**	**Interpretivist** Culture Political system	**Functionalist** Organism Brain

Figure 15. Comparison of world views related to the mission statement scenario.

Scenario 4: Task Force Process

In terms of the fourth scenario, which asked participants to consider the merits of task force process, at the time of the study the functionalist brains metaphor was dominant and was supported by the organic metaphor from within the same paradigm. The political metaphor from the interpretivist paradigm was also evident. The functionalist machine metaphor appeared as a negative stance in terms of achieving task force process.

The suggestion for future action retained stances of the functionalist paradigm by identifying the organic metaphor as the dominant frame, supported by the brains metaphor and interpretivist political and culture metaphors. The radical structuralist flux

and transformation metaphor was introduced as a frame to support the management of paradox and pluralism.

Time of Study		Proposed Future Storyline	
Radical Humanist	**Radical Structuralist**	**Radical Humanist**	**Radical Structuralist** Flux and transformation
Interpretivist	**Functionalist** Brain Organism	**Interpretivist** Culture Political system	**Functionalist** Organism Brain

Figure 16. Comparison of world views related to the task force process scenario.

Predominant College Paradigms

The orthodox views of organization common to the functionalist paradigm were the predominant traditions espoused by the college at the time of this study, along with one radical humanist psychic prison. In the critical evaluation storylines suggesting possible future action, some emphasis remained in the functionalist paradigm through organic and brains perspectives in all four scenarios. However, interpretivist perspectives entered into the picture for all four storylines in terms of the cultural metaphor and in two storylines for the political metaphor. Radical structuralist perspectives associated with the flux and transformation metaphor were suggested in all four scenarios.

Therefore, in the critical evaluation storylines, all future-action storylines included perspectives from the functionalist, interpretivist, and radical structuralist paradigms. This would proffer an overall suggestion that members of the college could

consider moving to a more organic and collaborative governance structure and into a learning organization mode; it also suggests that work could be undertaken to create a shared culture and to recognize that change will involve political aspects. As well, with an emphasis in the radical structuralist paradigm through flux and transformation notions, members of the college are encouraged to identify internal tensions and contradictions and endeavor to understand how its actions impact on its own future potential and the shaping of an infinitely large and complex society.

The critical evaluation storylines tended to maintain an objectivist view of reality, but also recognized that social constructions of reality would always be in development and undergoing change. Ontologically, if the storylines came to life, members of the college would likely continue to be significantly concerned with regulation: "(a) status quo, (b) social order, (c) consensus, (d) social integration and cohesion, (e) solidarity, (f) need satisfaction, and (g) actuality" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 18). However, they would also begin to consider "(a) radical change, (b) structural conflict, (c) modes of domination, (d) contradiction, (e) emancipation, (f) deprivation, and (g) potentiality" (p. 18).

In order to use Morgan's (1986, 1997a) model, attempts must be made to span the boundaries of metaphorical images and the four paradigms in order to gain insight into a number of organizational characteristics. With regard to critical-evaluation storylines in this study, three paradigms were highlighted for coordinated and possible future action. This raises a question regarding whether or not the distinctive assumptions from multiple paradigms can be blended in organizational life. Burrell and Morgan (1979) noted:

> Our research suggests that whilst the activity within the context of each paradigm is often considerable, inter-paradigmatic "journeys" are much rarer. . . . For a theorist to switch paradigms calls for a change in meta-theoretical assumptions, something which, although manifestly possible, is not often achieved in practice. (pp. 24-25)

The experiment related to seeking an understanding of study scenario foundations provides a basis for further discussion with members of the college, and it also raises more questions: Is it possible to span paradigms? Can the partial diagnostic reading based on metaphorical views provide enough information to support an analysis that is larger in magnitude, that being of paradigmatic stances? Is it coincidence that the diagnostic readings tended to indicate that single paradigmatic stances were involved with each scenario? Is it meaningful that in three of the four scenarios related to stance at the time of the study, the functionalist view presided? Do the multiple paradigmatic storylines reflect the need for a more eclectic view of organizational foundations as we move into the new century? Or is the eclectic view of foundations primarily an echo outcome related to the organizational method that encourages recognizing multiple dimensions of organization? Does the overview of the college at the time of the study, and of critical evaluation storylines, provide insight into my own paradigmatic stances more than those of members of the college? No reflection or tentative response to those questions will be broached in this study. They do remain, however, as an affirmation of the complexity of organization and of the people who create them.

Summary

An endeavor was made in this chapter to seek out the foundations of the metaphorical images of organization. Given the thoughts devoted to this cause, it appears that five of the eight metaphors are founded on an objectivist notion of reality. Those five metaphors are organizations as machines, organisms, brains, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination. Three of the metaphors are based on the assumption that reality is subjective and socially created. Those three are organizations as cultures, political systems, and psychic prisons. Another five of the metaphors—machines, organisms, brains, cultures, and political systems—tend to build on assumptions that society is woven through with some unity and coherence; whereas

three of the metaphors—psychic prisons, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination—perceive society as rife with change, conflict, and contradiction.

CHAPTER VI

OVERVIEW, OBSERVATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

At the start of this dissertation, quotations from Tester (1993) introduced the research theme: a quest to explore foundations that support different ways that people see, and act in, their world. The concept of organizations, perceived in this study as social constructions, provided a broad context for the quest, and Gareth Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization* and Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis* provided the navigational means.

The research comprised two parts. In the first part, Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of organizational analysis was applied to "read" one organization. Through this process, an endeavor was made to recognize activities in the organization under study that seemed to operationalize "implications of the metaphor defining a particular school of thought" (Morgan, 1980, p. 606). In the second part, consideration was given to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) paradigms and their relationship to the eight metaphors that are the basis for Morgan's method of organizational analysis.

In this study, then, identifying the foundations of an organization was inductive, starting with the detailed identification of "tools and texts" (Morgan, 1980, p. 606), representative of organizational theories which Morgan (1986, 1997a) had related to particular schools of thought and communicated under the auspices of various metaphorical images of organization. Next, the metaphorical images of organization were related to alternative realities, which Burrell and Morgan (1979) termed *paradigms*. Hence, theories were grouped under metaphorical headings, and metaphorical headings were grouped under paradigms.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of each phase of the research as well as suggesting potential additional research areas and highlighting study implications for those participating in the research.

Part 1

The purpose of Part 1 of this thesis was to develop a personal understanding and style of using Gareth Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical process of organizational analysis. Two major research questions guided Part 1 of this thesis. Each is reviewed in the following.

Research Question 1

A major commitment in this part of the study was to work closely with Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of organizational analysis as presented in *Images of Organization*. Research Question 1, Part 1, was:

In what ways does Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical process of reading and evaluating organization contribute to understanding situations and deciding on subsequent actions?

In the following, I share my observations and additional literature on strengths of the model relating to levels of learning that can be accessed in the process, on using metaphor in organizational analysis, and on becoming a story teller. Next, I comment on some of the model's limits and weaknesses.

Levels of Learning in the Process

In an interview with Sage Publications (1999), Morgan suggested that the type of process he introduced in *Images of Organization* and *Imaginization* would continue to become much more mainstream. He emphasized that

> students, more than ever, have to be taught to be able to think for themselves, to interpret situations creatively, to have a repertoire of ways of approaching and resolving complex problems. A capacity for critical, creative, thinking is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity. (n.p.).

When using the process, it struck me that the levels of learning that Morgan was trying to help people achieve were those that were comparable with the mid to higher

levels of learning found in Bloom's taxonomy. In this taxonomy of learning, Bloom suggested that people move cognitively from knowledge to comprehension; and from that base to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The style of learning that I undertook, and which was accessible in the process, involved all these levels. I began with *knowing* and *comprehending* the theories that Morgan grouped under metaphors of organization. Then I moved to *applying* those theories by recognizing their presence in study participants' descriptions and observations of the organization under study. Subsequently, in order to develop the diagnostic reading, I had to *analyze* the effect of each metaphorical view—that is, school of thought—on the organization being "read." Next, to create storylines, I had to *synthesize* my "reading" of the organization and *evaluate* the impact of the metaphorical views, comprising schools of thought, on the operation of the organization at the time of the study and on the possible created realities for the organization in its future. As a learner, I was completely engaged with Morgan's process, and I began to realize that people who use it can benefit at various levels—from the rudimentary to the more advanced levels of learning.

I think that the following statement from Morgan (as cited in Sage Publications, 1999) implied that learning in the realm of organizational and management studies may have, in the past, remained at the more basic learning levels, whereas his process allows room for people to move to as advanced a level as they are interested in and prepared to undertake. He suggested that, in terms of organizational studies curriculum, there needs to be a move away "from teaching organization and management *research*, and organization and management *theory* toward teaching about *how we can think about organization* and *how we can organize in creative ways*" (n.p.). Part of the challenge and reward of using Morgan's method is to enter the realm where independent and creative thinking makes it possible to contribute more mindfully to the creation of a possible organizational reality.

I was drawn to Morgan's method because I wanted to understand alternative points of view. I had experiences with my own learning at the postsecondary level, where ways of thinking were so deeply embedded in certain ways of viewing the world that when I went forward to work in a complex organization, it was soon clear to me that much of what people think and do in the workplace had not been considered in my postsecondary educational preparation for work. By providing various ways of thinking about organization, the method that Morgan (1986, 1997a, 1997b) proposed is an invitation to think outside of accustomed boxes. Morgan believes it is important to teach students how to see, how to think, and how to act in new ways and to show them how they can challenge their preconceptions in a constructive way and develop alternative frames for understanding and taking action.

In doing this we will take the teaching of organization and management theory out of the classroom and make it more of a life skill where students can challenge their own perspectives in the most fundamental sense, as a basis for creative action.

Morgan's (1986, 1997a) process demands seeing organization from a variety of points of view. This in itself contributes to understanding that there are many legitimate ways of seeing situations and that no one way of seeing is the truth. The method requires double-loop and critical thinking and bolstering confidence in one's own intuition.

Metaphor in Organizational Analysis

Chia (1996) discussed the use of metaphor in organizational analysis producing "multiple static images" (p. 130)—that is, seeing organization in a variety of ways—and also as a process that he called *metaphorization*. Metaphorization involves challenging one's own perspectives. Chia described this concept in the following way:

> The purpose of using metaphors in organizational analysis is not so much about whether organizations are better understood as "machines," "cultures" or "psychic situations;" rather it is about a slow and stratified deconstructing of

> deeply entrenched and therefore "taken-for-granted" modes of ordering, concepts, categories and priorities, all of which collectively work to circumscribe the outer limits of contemporary managerial discourse. (pp. 130-131)

In my experience, using Morgan's process started with seeing organization as a combination of "multiple static images," which, when taken together, portray part of the character of the organization. However, using the process extensively led me not only to expand my repertoire of organizational theory and organizational "reading" skills, but also to find that the process helped me to reflect upon, piece together, affirm, and work on internalizing a professional identity and philosophy of my own. I have found that undertaking this study has helped me to lead and manage with a broader range of understanding than I possessed prior to the study, because the process pressed me to clarify my personal philosophy by challenging, confirming, modifying, adding to, or eliminating some positions I had held earlier. As a result, I began to develop a more consistent, wider, and deeper philosophy about how to work with people and how to consider and approach organizational situations. The activity of developing my personal philosophy was enhanced throughout this study and is something that I will continue to develop long after it is finished.

On a broader scale, people in educational organizations may benefit from engaging in metaphorical analysis, for the purposes of understanding and possibly changing their contribution to educational process. In this research, the consideration of activities related to the curriculum for the millenium task force suggested that curriculum is as complex as organization. An approach to examining current contributions to educational process might be that people in educational organizations consider using the existing metaphors presented in *Images of Organization* (1986, 1997a), and in *Imaginization* (1997b), along with metaphors in the literature that relate to curriculum to gain a comprehensive array of insights into their combined organizational and curricular character. However, as Morgan (1997b) suggested in

Imaginization, people should not be constrained to using established metaphors and should also create new metaphors that challenge and possibly lead to modification or enhancement of their current practices. Hence, exploring the literature for metaphors that are used to emphasize various points of view and creating new and unique metaphors of curriculum may offer insight into the organization's involvement in developing educational philosophies and practices. For example, Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (1995) in *Understanding Curriculum* have conceived of curriculum as "historical text," "political text," "racial text," "poststructuralist, deconstructed, postmodern text," "autobiographical/biographical text," "aesthetic text," "theological text," and "institutionalized text" to name some. By adopting and adapting Morgan's metaphorical model of analysis to aspects of organization that are unique to that organization, such as curriculum in the case of educational organizations, existing, underused or new metaphors may emerge and serve to expand understanding and role in the evolution of processes of which they are a part.

Furthermore, moving now to a system-wide scale, metaphorical analysis, when used to compare and contrast different types of educational organizations might lead to an understanding of how such organizations together create their educational system. For example, in the interviews conducted for this research, one respondent characterized technical institutes as "male" and community colleges as "female." Using metaphors such as these could open up a dialogue on educational philosophy and role within the system. An understanding of role may in turn provide opportunities for enhanced integration of the system, and possibly smoother transitions for students from one organization to another.

Another skill that the process helped me, and may help others and systems of others, to develop was that of putting together a story of the organization, through the diagnostic readings and critical evaluation storylines.

Becoming a Story Teller

At a point in time, as a contributing member of a management group, it becomes necessary to share one's observations and interpretations of organizational situations. According to Clark and Salaman (1996), management consultants and, I would add, managers, need to be "story tellers attempting to create a reality for their audience (i.e., clients) which captures their imagination and commitment" (p. 175). Whether one is a consultant or a manager within an organization, the skill of story telling helps to communicate "ways of knowing organizations" (p. 180). In this regard, Morgan (1996a) spoke of the significance of his book, *Images of Organization,* as follows:

> My conscious aim was to position the book in a way that was accessible to a wide audience, framing it within the context of a managerial orientation that stressed the utility of using different metaphors for capturing different aspects of organizational reality, and for diagnosing and acting on organizational problems. Undoubtedly, it 'privileges' a managerial point of view. But the deeper aim of the book is to model a way of thinking that uses metaphor to confront and deal with the complex, and paradoxical, character of organizational life. (p. 238)

I found that Morgan's (1986, 1997a) process helped me develop an outline for writing a story about an organization and the possible realities that could be created. The metaphorical analysis process provided a method that could be used to order and classify my perceptions, which in turn helped me to make sense of a complex, and at times confusing, situation.

In this study, three major contributions of Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of organizational analysis related to becoming better at understanding organizational situations and deciding on subsequent actions were identified. First, the process itself is accessible at a range of levels of learning from basic knowledge through to the more advanced evaluation level. Because of this, Morgan's process can be used by people at varying levels, and all will achieve types of successes related to reading and evaluating organizations and developing action plans. In other words, the method has something positive to offer to any person who chooses to use it. Second, the process entails seeing

organization in different ways. As a result of trying to understand various complementary or competing views, people may find that they reflect on their own views and, as a result, strengthen their own philosophies relative to how they work with and understand people and situations in organizations. Hence, the process may help people clarify their own personal philosophy. Third, the process offered a way to diagnose and evaluate organizations. This made it possible to describe current, perceived realities as a diagnostic reading and to create possible new realities in the form of critical evaluation storylines. Hence, using the process may help people piece together "stories" of organization that may possibly help others to see features of organization in a changed and potentially meaningful way.

Limits and Weaknesses of the Eight-Metaphor Model

In this research I worked closely with Morgan's eight-metaphor model and as a result of that experience validated its strengths. An attempt is now made to consider potential limits and weaknesses.

The eight-metaphor model seems to be subjective in nature because it is heavily dependent on analyst's perspectives, intuition and interpretation of perceived multiple realities. There are no predictable outcomes expected from the analysis except that various views of organizational characteristics will be presented, and those views may not represent empirical, generalizeable data. Furthermore, if persons view organization as a tangible, unidimensional and static entity which they "understand," they may deem analysis of the organization from different perspectives as irrelevant. In addition, because the eight-images model is dependent on the interpretation of organizational characteristics by analysts, it may allow them to see what they want to see and potentially serve to sustain status quo. In this way, the model may become a legitimizing activity for creating realities that are comfortable to the analysts, or that are voiced by those participating in the analysis and who have the most power and influence.

If an organizational analysis is conducted using only the eight metaphors presented in *Images of Organization* (1986, 1997a), as demonstrated in this research, analysts must be aware that they have only a partial understanding of the organization under study. Although perspectives may be broadened by using the eight-images model, nevertheless, observations that do result from the analysis are contained within the scope of the metaphors used. In *Imaginization* (1997b), Morgan urges people to identify and explore other metaphors that might provide insight into unique organizational characteristics that otherwise may not be investigated within the bounds of the eight metaphors.

Time and space bind any activity, and the activities within this model are no exception. The diagnosis and evaluation that result from the analysis are, therefore, directly related to the time and space within which they were conducted. Organizations are constantly changing and those using the model should be mindful that the analysis is limited to the time and place within which it was conducted. This observation applies to all types of analyses of "living systems" and is not solely particular to Morgan's eight-metaphor model.

When using the model, the analyst is encouraged to view situations from a variety of perspectives, which places the analyst, theoretically, in the position of being an external observer of organization. On the other hand, the manner in which analysts as involved action researchers "see" organization using the eight metaphors is an extension of themselves. When working with the model, then, analysts engage in a paradoxical experience, where they may sense that as external observers they have suspended their own views, and yet, the manner in which they make sense of their observations as action researchers is uniquely their own. So, persons may not always recognize that the analysis, encompassing multiple metaphorical views, is an extension of themselves and not an entity that exists independently and separate from themselves. The analysis will be biased by the preferences of the analyst as action researcher.

Last, the model is based on a vast knowledge of organizational theory and depends on abilities of people to intellectually connect with the eight different points of view. Hence, using the model in its fullest sense as an analytical framework is demanding in terms of learning theory and expanding personal mindsets.

In summary, Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical method of organizational analysis is accessible to people at various levels of intellectual engagement, encourages critical thinking and clarification of one's own views and philosophies of organization, and provides steps that lead to understanding aspects of an organization and to developing thoughtful plans for possible futures. With regard to potential limits and weaknesses, observations arose regarding the possible subjectivity of the model, the parameters of the model related to possible confinement by the eight images and the time and space of the analysis, and the paradoxical nature of the model which places analysts ostensibly in the position of external observers and also as involved action researchers. In addition, if all eight images of organization are used in an analysis, the model demands extensive knowledge of organizational theory and the ability to engage intellectually with different points of view, even though some views may not be personally embraced by the analyst.

The foregoing observations relate back to Research Question 1 and focus on how the processes within Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method provide those who use the method with enhanced personal skills: striving to achieve advanced levels of learning, critical thinking, and abilities to evaluate situations, devise plans of action, and create echoes and stories of organization. The process may also be deemed subjective, as a potentially bounded framework, and as paradoxical in that it places analysts in potentially contradictory roles as external observers and as action researchers. In the next section, the subproblems that accompanied Research Question 1 are addressed. They focus not on benefits of process, but rather on outcomes of the process.

Research Question 1: Subproblems

Question 1 subproblems related to the specific application and outcome of Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method in a college setting; they were as follows:

- Considering the scenarios addressed in this study, what metaphorical organizational views appear to be evident in each college scenario?
- Based on the comments and observations provided by study participants, what critical evaluation storylines could guide the college in future activities relative to the scenarios addressed in this study?

The subproblems were addressed in Chapters III and IV of this thesis. To work on the first subproblem, participants' comments which appeared to reflect each of the metaphorical views were grouped in order to develop a framework for the organizational contexts described in Chapter III. Next, the college characteristics that emerged from the organizational contexts were summarized in a diagnostic reading for each scenario and presented in Chapter IV. In order to address the second subproblem, critical evaluation storylines were developed for each scenario and presented in Chapter IV. The storylines resulted from synthesizing the college characteristics and putting forth possible action plans for the future, based on the insights gained through developing organizational contexts and diagnostic readings.

Had this study progressed to the level of actively initiating planned futures, the critical evaluation storylines would have been a springboard for discussion with members of the college in facilitated group sessions, where a shared storyline for the future would have been collectively created. In the case of this research, Chapters III and IV were circulated to study participants for their review, to ensure that their comments had not been taken out of context and that they approved of their comments' inclusion. At the same time, all participants were asked to react to the organizational contexts, diagnostic readings, and critical evaluation storylines. In subsequent follow-up

telephone conversations and some electronic mail communication, study participants commented on the organizational contexts, diagnostic readings, and critical evaluation storylines developed in this study for the four scenarios.

One administrator commented that the organizational contexts reflected the time of the study, and one executive officer affirmed that the contexts and diagnostic readings made sense for understanding what was happening within the organization at the time.

Four people—one instructor, two administrators, and one executive officer—noted the comprehensiveness of the organizational contexts, as well as instances where the contexts and diagnostic readings "rang true." Another instructor commented that the diagnostic readings and storylines were "accurate and insightful." One administrator and one instructor commented that the diagnostic readings were "hard to get into" and that possibly reading the entire dissertation might help in understanding the information in Chapter IV.

Whereas the participants were able to confirm the accuracy of the organizational "reading," they were not involved in the development of the storylines, and as a result they felt neither invested in nor as inclined to comment on the storylines. One executive officer, however, volunteered that the diagnostic readings and critical evaluation storylines served as a good scenario-building model, providing that those who used the method retained their fluidity and ability not to compartmentalize. The same executive officer noted that the critical evaluation storyline could serve to reopen dialogue on curriculum within the college.

In the case of all four scenarios, particular metaphorical views emerged from the "readings" of participants' comments. As a result of "reading" organization, a broader appreciation for the makeup of the college was achieved by the researcher. Working on the diagnostic readings required analytical thinking; whereas creating critical evaluation

storylines involved a mixture of intuition and understanding of the organization. Additional insights related to using Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method are shared next.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2, Part 1, was:

What observations can be made about Morgan's (1986, 1997a) organizational analysis method that might provide insight for others who wish to use his process?

In *Images of Organization*, Morgan (1986, 1997a) warned of various "danger zones" that could be encountered using his method. Some of my experiences with those zones are described in the following.

One View at a Time

In order to work with and learn each metaphorical school of thought, I focussed on one metaphor at a time when I developed the organizational contexts and the reflective readings. Choosing to work with the transcriptions of participants' comments in this exclusive and focussed manner, I recall feeling confident that I *knew* what the organization's predominant strengths and weaknesses were at the end of each metaphoric reading. As a result, I started to write some recommendations at the conclusion of each metaphoric reading of the organization under study. Part of using Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method involves keeping as open a mind as possible and not being impulsive and centering on particular conclusions before the comprehensive "reading" of organization is completed. The gravitational pull that resulted from being immersed in one view of organization at a time was a testimony to the tone of righteousness that accompanies dogmatism. It is ironic, and at the same time affirming, that although Morgan's method was designed to help people acquire a more *eclectic* view of organization, the manner in which I initially learned and practiced the method led me into temporary *bounded* realities.

Furthermore, working within one metaphorical view at a time created a cognitive and affective sensation that I was building up mental structures and spaces within which to live out each metaphorical view. When it was time to move on to another metaphor, I recall experiencing a conscious breaking down of the mental structures and sensitivities that I had developed, so I could make way for the changed thinking and feeling that would accommodate the next view. Perhaps this experience paralleled one of Morgan's (1996) design features, which he noted as follows: "I have consciously sought to develop and model a postmodern approach to organization and management that thrives on continuous construction, deconstruction and reconstruction" (p. 236). I recall the tangible sense of opening up a space, then thinking and feeling within that space, and then closing down those distinct and unique patterns in order to move onto another view. Some examples of my experiences working with the metaphors follow.

The machine and, to an extent, the organism metaphors for me produced a sense of confinement and reactivity. On the other hand, the flux and transformation metaphor left me in a free fall through its space, challenging my abilities to grasp complexity and magnitude and recognize the possibly far-reaching implications that individual actions may create. The culture, political system, and, to an extent, the psychic prison metaphors had a therapeutic effect for me because thinking in their spaces replaced old anxieties with a new sense of peace and understanding regarding some organizational experiences. The brain metaphor seemed incomplete to me, because I had anticipated that a part of it would be a lively and creative space, but instead it felt technical and scientific. The instruments of domination metaphor made me more aware of my naivete, and I made a mental note to explore critical theory literature later to see if any issues would seem personally important to me.

The journey through an organization from within each metaphor was an intellectually challenging, as well as a personal, experience. As I lived within each

metaphor, I found that I had to stop, shift, frame, reframe, think, think, think, and repeat the cycle, for I tried to see if there were parts of each metaphorical view in each of the four study scenarios. With respect to such a systematic approach, I had to reflect on Morgan's (1997a) comment:

> The aim is *not* a regimented approach where we have to apply all metaphorical frameworks to all situations. The aim is *not* to advocate viewing organizations as machines, organisms, brains, or cultures in any mechanistic fashion. Rather, the aim is to use an understanding of metaphor to create a sensitivity for the competing dimensions of a situation, so that we can proceed with our interpretations in a flexible manner. . . . Any person trying to apply every metaphor to every situation in a formal or mechanized way will get overwhelmed by the complexity. (p. 428)

Having completed an in-depth application of the model, I am better able to sense competing, complementary, or dominant schools of thought as part of my newly acquired "reading" skills. It is no longer necessary for me to be as systematic when analyzing a situation, because the "reading" now tends to come more naturally and spontaneously. However, as a *learner*, I found it was beneficial to be systematic in the "readings" by working as completely as possible with each metaphorical view. In my first attempts to use the method, I thought I would be able to recognize the various metaphorical characteristics by listening to the audiotapes of the interviews. However, as noted earlier in this dissertation, my "organizational reading" skills were not developed well enough to discern the various dimensions of the situation. Looking back, however, I would not change the manner in which I worked at learning the method. As a result of this study, I have subsequently and successfully used the process on an individual basis to identify various dimensions of organizational situations.

Hermeneutic Approach

Explaining one of his approaches, Morgan (1997a) said, "The way I develop and use metaphor for the present book has much in common with the hermeneutic approach to social analysis" (p. 381). As I reflected on my experience with using Morgan's

(1986, 1997a) method, the following passage from Slattery (1995) came to mind. Slattery described a "metaphor of a running stream" (p. 117), developed by Haggerson and Bowman in 1992, "to explain the multiple viewpoints of hermeneutic inquiry" (Slattery, 1995, p. 117). In Haggerson and Bowman's first paradigm, which they called *rational/theoretical*, the researcher stands at the edge of the stream and, as an objective observer, "makes generalizations and predictions about the flow of the water" (p. 117). In their second, *mythological/practical* paradigm, "the researcher gets in the boat, experiences the stream, and becomes a participant observer" (p. 117). In their third, *evolutionary/transformational* paradigm "the researcher becomes the stream as a total participant" (p. 117); and in the fourth paradigm, called *normative/critical*, "the researchers attempt to identify all the manifest and hidden factors and emancipate themselves and others from them" (p. 118).

For the most part, I experienced a strong sense of autonomous self and worked from an observer's stance when analyzing the data and "reading" the organizational situations. In this study, however, I worked on my own with data, which may have contributed to the experience of being an observer. Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method is also, and in some cases probably preferably, designed to work with people in facilitated group settings.

On yet another plane, I worked with the metaphors as intellectual constructs that I could accept, and in the process of trying to learn the metaphors, I moved from being a participant observer of the metaphorical realms to becoming as total a participant as I could be in the school of thought represented by each metaphor. And, finally, as a result of the observations that I made through my best-possible immersion in each metaphorical realm, I identified factors that the organization under study might consider liberating. My experience with the method, then, was that I seemed to maintain an objectified view of reality while I enacted the created perspectives of a number of points

of view. I wondered if my experience was related to the very way that the method was developed. Morgan (1996) described *Images of Organization* in the following way:

> Clearly *Images of Organization* is a book that is itself rooted in a dominant metaphorical frame stressing the social construction of reality. But it is not a "solipsist" work that denies an objective reality. Rather its position is that objective reality can only be grasped subjectively through the metaphors that shape our thinking. (p. 239)

Earlier, in his 1980 article, Morgan raised the notion that "human beings are constantly attempting to develop conceptions about the world" (p. 609) and "attempting to make the world concrete by giving it form" (p. 610). He elaborated:

> Through language, science, art and myth, for example, humans structure their world in meaningful ways. These attempts to objectify a reality embody subjective intentions in the meanings which underwrite the symbolic constructs which are used. Knowledge and understanding of the world are not given to human beings by external events; humans attempt to objectify the world through means of essentially subjective processes. (p. 610)

It seems to me that the manner in which I experienced the method may be resonant with the notions that founded the method.

The more I look inward at how I view the world, the more I believe that my experiences and my thinking, and probably many other notions to which I am not sensitive right now come together to make a world that is mine. And I think, for as much as I try, I will never *really know* what the worlds of others are like. For me, the journey through an organization using Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method was intellectual and virtual, and personal.

Before I leave this topic, I would like to explore Morgan's (1997a) notion that relates to engaging objective realities subjectively (p. 429) a bit further. Morgan (1980) asserted:

> Words, names, concepts, ideas, facts, observations, etc., do not so much denote external "things," as conceptions of things activated in the mind by a selective and meaningful form of noticing the world, which may be shared with others.

> They are not to be seen as a representation of a reality "out there," but as tools for capturing and dealing with what is perceived to be "out there." (p. 610)

That a perceived reality exists, parts of which are consensual and shared, seems to be a main point that would suggest that human conceptions form subjective realities, cognitively and personally; and subsequently, through communication, members of groups may agree that they share a subjective notion of a reality that then becomes a consensual form of an "objectified" reality. Reality in this sense, then, is socially tangible and "certain" for as long as consensus seemingly prevails. In this manner, one becomes an observer of a socially constructed, tentatively certain reality which can be examined in search of recognizable traits. For without the ability to agree on reality attributes, we could be nowhere that we would collectively know.

Understanding Method

Although Morgan (1997a, 1997b) expanded on his methodology in the second edition of *Images of Organization* and in *Imaginization*, I initially experienced some difficulty interpreting the reflective reading portion of the method. In an interview with Joe Katzman (1996), Morgan suggested that the process is difficult to describe in linear terms, and for that reason he used case studies and stories of actual events to demonstrate the process. It seemed to me that the case studies did help to make the process "live"; however , I also had a sense that I was involved in an application of a process—specifically, the reflective reading portion comprising diagnostic readings and critical evaluation storylines—before I had an introduction to what the overall process was trying to achieve. Furthermore, the manner in which I experimented with Morgan's model took me from creating organizational contexts by using the relatively substantive descriptions of theories and connecting those with participants' descriptions of situations, to a mode where analytical thinking was closed off and intuitive, and personal frames took over for the critical evaluation storylines. This leap from thinking in terms of something in a situation being like something in a theory to following one's

own intuition and gut feeling challenges the user to be somewhat of a scientist one moment and somewhat of an artist the next moment.

On another point, I want to note that using the method was fun. Once the initial walk-through of the organizational scenarios had been completed in the systematic mode that I chose and which resulted in organizational contexts and diagnostic readings, the next step was to create critical evaluation storylines. Intuition and personal mindsets are called to the forefront to "write" the storyline for the organization. And it was fun putting the pieces of the puzzle together to create a desired and preferred picture. The metaphorical views of organization that seemed appropriate emerged with a type of emphasis based on the diagnostic reading. Having completed a multidimensional reading of organization, the future organizational directions that could be considered seem to be clear. Although the diagnostic reading may be perceived as two-way, in actuality the readings are at least three-way because they involve a meshing of the situation with the metaphorical frames with the personal frame of the analyst.

I found that the diagnostic readings and critical evaluation storylines that emerged were somewhat surprising in that they were not, in all cases, what I would have identified as current organization thrusts nor as possible next activities, had I not undertaken the organizational analysis process. In this sense, my experience was similar to that outlined by Morgan (1997a), who noted: "Effective readings are *generative*. They produce insights and actions that were not there before. They open new action opportunities. They make a difference" (p. 372).

Reflections on Study Scenarios

Four scenarios were developed for participants to consider and comment upon. In retrospect, I feel that Scenario 3, related to the college mission statement, presented a complex notion in terms that were too simple. Asking participants to consider whether an environment exists "out there" or is created by the actions of a collective group of

people may have been more meaningful had people had the opportunity to explore the notions beneath those particular world views. As I analyzed and worked with the scenario, I realized that it was the result of my overly zealous, and not mindful or pensive enough, wish to understand a mission that I now think of as based in a functionalist view of the world rather than my own inclination toward an interpretive view. Of the four scenarios, I felt that I may have biased the possible responses from participants because Scenario 3 basically led people to consider two specific options.

An overview of Part 1 of the study has been provided. The focus in this part was to interpret and apply Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of organizational analysis and provide observations on the experience.

Part 2

In Part 2 of this dissertation, I explored the underlying assumptions of the metaphors used in Morgan's (1986, 1997a) *Images of Organization* by considering their possible relationships to paradigms presented by Burrell and Morgan (1979) in their *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*. Although using the metaphors for analysis in Part 1 helped me partially to understand the complexity of the organization under study and provided me with a more comprehensive base upon which to design possible future action plans, I found that I had not yet completed my quest related to understanding the foundations of the organization. As a result, I undertook Part 2 of this study and sought to clarify metaphor-paradigm relationships. The third research question became:

What relationships appear to exist among the metaphorical schools of thought in *Images of Organization* (Morgan, 1986, 1997a) and the world view paradigms in *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis* (Burrell & Morgan, 1979)?

This part of the research was described in Chapter V. In the following, an outline of findings is provided.

Metaphor-Paradigm Relationships

As a first step, I familiarized myself with Burrell and Morgan's (1979) paradigms: functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist, and radical structuralist. I also sought additional literature written by Morgan (1986, 1997a) concerning metaphor-paradigm relationships. As a result of these efforts, it seemed to me that the machine, organic, and brain metaphors, as presented in *Images of Organization*, represented schools of thought that shared assumptions of the functionalist paradigm. The culture and political metaphors appeared to reflect interpretivist assumptions, and the psychic prison metaphor related to the radical humanist paradigm. The flux and transformation and the instrument of domination metaphor seemed to cohere with the radical structuralist view. Given that Burrell and Morgan conceived of the paradigms by clustering like assumptions related to the nature of science and to the nature of society, my exploration of metaphor-paradigm relationships suggested that the five metaphors categorized in the functionalist and radical structuralist paradigms seemed to assume an objectivist stance concerning the nature of science and by endorsing a reality "out there," and that the five metaphors categorized in the functionalist and interpretivist paradigms were inclined to view the nature of society as somewhat unified that allows for seeking out more regulatory traits, than radical.

In this study I endeavored to locate the metaphors within paradigms on a broad base and did not undertake the additional, more detailed analysis of determining the extents to which the metaphors fell into the paradigms in terms of being purely within one paradigm or of tending to lean toward some assumptions that belonged to another paradigm.

College Paradigms

Using this initial exploration and plotting of metaphors in relation to paradigms, I returned to the diagnostic readings and critical evaluation storylines developed in

Part 1 of this study to identify possible foundations of the organization under study. Based on my interpretation and grouping of participants' comments into representations of metaphorical views and my understanding of metaphorical-paradigm relationships, I speculated that functionalist views were predominant in the college at the time of this study. Next, considering the composition of the critical evaluation storylines, which I had set forth as possible directions for future action, I found that some emphasis remained in the functionalist paradigm and that interpretivist and radical structuralist paradigmatic views had been added.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study may serve as a basis for ongoing dialogue and reflection for those people at the college who participated in this research. In addition, those persons were introduced to Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of organizational analysis, and they may choose to assess and experiment with it in their future activities.

The endeavor to understand metaphor-paradigm relationships may help people who work with Morgan's (1986, 1997a) method of organizational analysis gain insight into the preferred ways of seeing and creating organizational realities. The metaphors are not world views in and of themselves, but rather are groupings of schools of thought that share like assumptions about the nature of science and society.

This research provided affirmation that the method provides a way to interpret and categorize organizational events and world views; and although the method itself is a creation based on other creations of reality, nevertheless it serves as a sense-making modality.

Possibilities for Ongoing Research

The more I worked with Morgan's (1986, 1997a, 1997b) method of organizational analysis, the more I appreciated its complexity and scope. As a result of working with the method in this research, I raise the following possibilities for ongoing

research that would focus on particular aspects of the method found in *Images of Organization* and *Imaginization*.

Research on the implications of using metaphor in organizational analysis may provide additional insight into what the method reveals and conceals in an analysis and how or whether using metaphor helps users to enhance their organizational analysis capabilities and contributions. On another plane, studies on ways that the method endorses postmodern and hermeneutic stances, for example, could be undertaken for the purposes of gaining additional understanding of the assumptions that underlie the method. Another area of research might focus on a more in-depth exploration of metaphor-paradigm relationships. This might help people who use the method to understand more consciously to which assumptions they personally subscribe in their day-to-day activities, resulting in the creation of realities.

In terms of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*, studies that revisit those paradigms and consider their relationship to movements and trends in organizational analysis over the last 20 years might suggest whether there are changes in societal and organizational world views. Another study might focus on the assumptions of more recent theories of organization and their relationships to the four paradigms outlined by Burrell and Morgan for the purposes of understanding the foundations of theory that has been introduced over the last 20 years.

The suggestions for additional research that are provided here tend to extend the theme and genesis of this study, and that relates to understanding foundations of various world views.

Conclusion

Morgan's (1986, 1997a) model of organizational analysis is accessible to persons at their own various levels of learning, and in this manner it makes a broad contribution to the field of organizational analysis by assisting people with basic to more advanced levels of understanding organization. Reflective and critical thinking are inherent in the method, and, as such, people who use the method may benefit personally by enhancing their thinking skills. As a result of reflective thinking, people who use the model may find that they clarify and commit to certain personal philosophies of their own related to how they perceive their own world. Furthermore, in addition to helping people acquire skills to "read" and evaluate organization, embedded in the method is a structure that can assist people in creating "stories" of organization that others may find resonate because of the comprehensive nature of the analysis and evaluation.

The method provides an opportunity to view organization from the vantage points of eight schools of thought, and this practice offers people the chance to acquire a broader grasp on the complexity of organization. In this study an endeavor was made to identify the underlying assumptions of the eight metaphorical views; and, in this manner, the method of organizational analysis was extended to another foundational level of examination.

Having undertaken this quest to seek understanding by interpreting and identifying traits of an organization through the filters of various constructed realities, including my interpretations of study participants' comments, organizational contexts, metaphorical images, and paradigmatic assumptions, I found myself reflecting upon and questioning the bounded and nominalist nature of my entire inquiry. Using the method has made me more mindful of my limitations, and at the same time has left me with an expanded capability to analyze, categorize, and suggest optional next directions for complex organizational situations. I brought all of myself to this study and endeavored

to find ways to better understand organization. As a result of trying to apply Morgan's (1986, 1997a) metaphorical method of analysis and understand Burrell and Morgan's (1979) sociological paradigms, I may now make different types of contributions to creating organizational realities than I would have made before I tried to understand foundations of thought and action and, hence, ways of seeing a world.

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APPENDIX A

FOUR STUDY SCENARIOS

Scenario 1: Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance principles were adopted by the college in 1991. An exploration of those principles demonstrates that a variety of formal administrative structures and cultures are in place to deal with the complex college milieu. Given this complexity, each distinct structure and culture tends to work well in the realization of certain principles, but not as well for some of the other principles.

Guiding Questions for Scenario 1

Which formal administrative structures and/or college cultures have helped or hindered your efforts to realize collaborative governance, given your understanding of the collaborative governance principles?

1.1 Can you provide examples of times when college structure or culture resonated with or supported your efforts to realize collaborative governance?

1.2 On the other hand, can you provide examples of which types of structure and culture hindered your efforts to realize collaborative governance?

1.3 Given your experiences, what practical suggestions do you have relative to how college structures and cultures can sustain or advance collaborative governance?

Scenario 2: Curriculum Task Force

Curriculum can be perceived as a space created for learning. This space, however, is heavily influenced by any number of factors, including institutional culture, administrative structures, and divisional and/or program curricular focus and purpose. Within the complex setting, the college task force on curriculum for the millenium brought forward recommendations to be acted upon by all persons, programs, and divisions across the college.

Guiding Questions for Scenario 2

In your experience, how have the college's various administrative structures and cultures impacted on the realization of curriculum for the millenium recommendations?

2.1 Can you provide examples of how college administrative structures and college cultures have resonated with or supported your efforts to act upon the curriculum recommendations?

2.2 On the other hand, can you provide examples of which administrative structures or college cultures have created tension or barriers in your efforts to act upon curriculum recommendations?

2.3 Which of the recommendations do you feel will thrive or wither in your particular administrative, divisional or program structure and culture?

Scenario 3: Mission Statement

The summary mission statement for the college is:

"Lifelong learning, responsive to the community."

The phrase is deeply embedded in the consciousness of all staff and is easily and often stated. College staff members' thoughts and actions are greatly influenced by the notion that the college's mission is to "respond" to communities or environments. There are at least two ways that this "responsive" mode can be understood.

In the first mode, members of the college respond to an environment made up of opportunities and threats 'out there.' They make plans to deal with the situations they discover, and then analyze how successful they were in surviving against the outside world. In the second mode, college members do not think of the community or environment as a domain separate from the college. Rather, they know that their interactions on behalf of the college help to create the very conditions that ultimately shape the community or environment within which they work. They understand that they create conditions so that they evolve as part of and as full participating members of the community or environment.

Guiding Questions for Scenario 3

In your experience or opinion, how are the "responsive" modes of connecting with the environment played out at the college, and what impact do they have on college structure and culture?

3.1 Where, when, why, and how have you experienced or acted in the ode of viewing the community or environment as a separate domain "out there" to be responded to?

3.2 On the other hand, where, when, why, and how have you experienced or acted in the mode of participating in the community or environment because it is "part of your own world"?

Scenario 4: Task Force Process

In the past decade, the college used task forces to consider two areas:

- college governance, and
- college curriculum for the new millenium

An aspect of task forces is that they create attention, interpretation, and recommendations that impact on an organization's operation. By virtue of their mandate, size, and composition, and because they focus only on some aspects of highly complex situations, task forces may be limited in their ability to identify all possible directions that could benefit the college.

Guiding Questions for Scenario 4

To what extent do task force processes and outcomes contribute to meaningful change in the college?

4.1 In your experience or opinion, how has the task force process, from inception through to follow-up activities, impacted on college structure and culture?

4.2 What alternatives to task forces could be introduced at the college?

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

Invitation to Participate in Research

PhD Thesis – Ann Marie Wilson

Every day, as academic leaders, administrators, instructors and nonacademic staff, decisions are made and actions taken that manifest themselves in the form of organizational culture and structure. Taken as a whole, in a college setting, those actions make up the environment in which students experience learning and living. Definite world views inform decision making and action taking, whether people are entirely conscious of them or not.

My PhD research is concerned with exploring the variety of world views that shape the creation of culture and structure at the college. In order to keep the study manageable, only a small portion of decisions made and actions taken can be considered. Therefore, the areas reviewed in this research relate to the college's collaborative governance principles, curriculum recommendations for the millenium, mission statement, and task force process. In addition to identifying which world views appear to be present within the college, the research will also seek to identify how the world views intersect with one another.

I anticipate that the research will open a dialogue on some college scenarios. As well, the discussions may result in some insight regarding what underlying assumptions and belief systems are at the core of college operation. Furthermore, participants might find that the process used to explore world views provides yet another diagnostic tool for understanding college operation.

Should you decide to participate in this study, your role would be to respond to college scenarios that I have prepared, by commenting on your experiences. *This can take place in an interview or a focus group session; the choice is yours. I will treat your responses confidentially and will uphold anonymity to the extent possible, given that this study is being conducted at only one college. You will not be referred to in the study by an alias name nor by your specific title, but rather your responses will be grouped with those of broad occupational sectors. For example, depending on your position, you will be referred to as an executive officer, administrator, or instructor.

If you have further questions about the study, you can call me at (telephone number), or you can contact my Thesis Supervisor, Dr. Margaret Haughey, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta.

I will contact you within the next week to see if you are interested in participating in this research. I appreciate your consideration. Scenarios, guiding questions, and reference material relevant to the scenarios are attached.

[*Note: All respondents chose individual interviews.]

APPENDIX C

CONSENT LETTER

This confirms that I have freely agreed to serve as a participant in Ann Marie Wilson's PhD research.

I understand that I will respond to scenarios prepared by Ann Wilson on college collaborative governance principles, curriculum for the millenium recommendations, mission statement, and task force process. In so doing I agree that I am not at any more risk of being harmed physically or mentally than I am in my everyday life at the college.

The researcher, Ann Wilson, has guaranteed that she will treat my responses confidentially, and that she will uphold anonymity to the extent possible, recognizing that the research will be conducted at only one college. I will not be named in the study, nor will my specific title be reported in relation to my responses. I shall be referred to as a member of an occupational group within the college, which shall be one of the following: executive officer, administrator, or instructor. I will have the opportunity to review what Ann Wilson has written with regard to my responses and observations, and can instruct her to omit any information that I do not want included in the study.

I have the right to withdraw from the research without penalty or risk of any kind at any time.

_____

(Signature)

_____

(Printed Name)

_____

(Date)